TALES FROM NO MAN'S LAND CALIFORNIA

An
Eclectic Collection
of
Historical Stories
and
Photographs
about a
Forgotten Area
of the
California Desert

Hank Kraychir

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Foreword

There once existed a small, but historically important, area that laid between Twentynine Palms, California, and the Arizona state line, which was dubbed No Man’s Land California by the *Los Angeles Times* in 1916. The center of No Man’s Land California was the once thriving and vital community known as Blythe Junction; commonly referred to as Rice today. Many people toiled in the harsh desert climate in and surrounding Blythe Junction-Rice, but few personal accounts still exist; as such, the stories and pictures contained within this publication is valuable evidence of its existence and historical importance.

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Chapter 1

Background: No Man's Land

The Origin of the Name Rice

The name Rice was first given to the community when the California Southern Railroad came to the area about 1915. Evidently, there was a popular engineer named Guy Rice who was honored by having his name placed upon the railroad stop, and in time the long-standing name of Blythe Junction was replaced. In spite of the town's name of Rice, for some reason, the United States postal service did not change the delivery name to Rice until 1933, with all mail delivered to the area using the name Blythe Junction. As this story will demonstrate, there are many differing accounts regarding the name Rice vs. Blythe Junction, even today.

Before Rice, there was Blythe Junction

Blythe Junction, circa 1910

In order to find the origin of Rice, a history search was conducted, which resulted in an account of Blythe Junction by Joseph Slevin, author of *The Amphibians of Western North America*, who must have visited the settlement before his book was first published in 1890. Additionally, the settlement of Blythe, which is located southeast of Blythe Junction, along the Colorado River, did not come into existence until 1882. Both locations were named after Thomas H. Blythe, a wealthy engineer from England. By simple deduction, it can be speculated that sometime between 1882, Blythe's death in 1883, and Slevin's research in the area that Blythe Junction came into existence. Although, at this point, the actual date that the name Blythe Junction was given is uncertain; and just as important, the question was there another name for the township before Thomas H. Blythe goes unanswered? Was there a settlement at the location and what was the reason this spot was chosen? These and many other matters still remain unanswered.

Where is Blythe Junction-Rice?

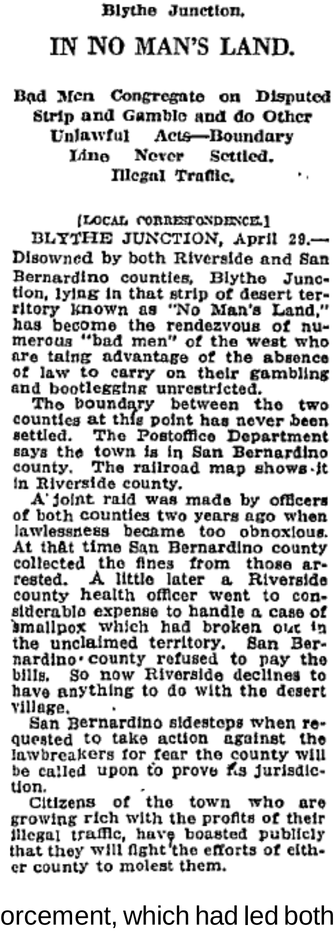
Rice is roughly 64 driving miles northwest of Blythe and 78 driving miles east of Twentynine Palms, and is today a skeleton of its former glory. Rice can now only boast a collapsed gas station, numerous concrete pads of an old school, post office, and assorted buildings, most dating back to its heyday in the 1940's.

Sintown in No Man's Land

The once small town of Blythe Junction has been referred to as "Sintown" and continues to be written about in a celebrated and legendary manner. In order to find out the truth about these urban legends, a newspaper archival search was conducted, which resulted in the discovery of a *Los Angeles Times* article from April 29, 1916 entitled "In No Man's Land," which described the lawless town.

Apparently both Riverside and San Bernardino Counties could not decide on jurisdiction for this community that laid in what was once referred to as No Man's Land.

To further complicate legal boundaries, the United States Postal Service believed the town was located in San Bernardino County, yet railroad maps showed the town was located in Riverside County. This confusion led to many problems for Blythe Junction; without legal recognition, there was no financial support for county enforcement, which had led both counties to conduct a joint raid two years earlier.



Blythe Junction.

IN NO MAN'S LAND.

Bad Men Congregate on Disputed Strip and Gamble and do Other Unlawful Acts—Boundary Line Never Settled. Illegal Traffic.

[LOCAL CORRESPONDENCE.]

BLYTHE JUNCTION, April 29.—Disowned by both Riverside and San Bernardino counties, Blythe Junction, lying in that strip of desert territory known as "No Man's Land," has become the rendezvous of numerous "bad men" of the west who are taing advantage of the absence of law to carry on their gambling and bootlegging unrestricted.

The boundary between the two counties at this point has never been settled. The Postoffice Department says the town is in San Bernardino county. The railroad map shows it in Riverside county.

A joint raid was made by officers of both counties two years ago when lawlessness became too obnoxious. At that time San Bernardino county collected the fines from those arrested. A little later a Riverside county health officer went to considerable expense to handle a case of smallpox which had broken out in the unclaimed territory. San Bernardino county refused to pay the bills. So now Riverside declines to have anything to do with the desert village.

San Bernardino sidesteps when requested to take action against the lawbreakers for fear the county will be called upon to prove its jurisdiction.

Citizens of the town who are growing rich with the profits of their illegal traffic, have boasted publicly that they will fight the efforts of either county to molest them.

Furthermore, an outbreak of smallpox in the town of Blythe Junction led Riverside County health officials to spend a great deal of money to halt the problem. Yet, when San Bernardino County was asked to pay the cost of containment, County Officials refused, which led to additional friction between these two jurisdictions.

A further archival search discovered some more interesting facts about another legendary raid on Blythe Junction in 1914. According to the *Los Angeles Times*, on April 1, 1914, another joint task force of law enforcement officers from Riverside and San Bernardino Counties conducted a raid in Blythe Junction. The *Times* reported that thirteen men and one woman were arrested on charges of running "an open frontier town." Of notable interest, deputy sheriff and postmaster Dave Moreno defied arrest, and was charged with conducting a "blind pig" in a secret cellar beneath the post office. Interestingly, further research determined that the term "blind pig" meant illegal drinking establishment.

Moreover, the amount levied against the town's inhabitants totaled $2,000, which was certainly a substantial amount of money in 1914; however, it was common knowledge that most of those arrested came from wealth and or were making a great deal of money as a result of their illegal activity.

There were several prominent people arrested; of particular interest was Mrs. Floyd Brown, the divorced wife of one of the most influential men in the Blythe area. Also arrested was Elvin Ellis, a member of a leading Grand Rapids Michigan family. Ellis's father, who was a large cutlery dealer, said the family would help their son. The most interesting account of the raid was about Tom Brown, a black man, who arrived just as the event began. Apparently, Brown and his partner simply ran because they had stowed away and did not have enough money for train fare. The only shots fired were when these two men fled on foot. After their capture, both men were only charged with evading railroad fare. The Santa Fe station agent, who was said not to have been involved in the illegal dealings of the town, was the only man left in Blythe Junction when the police departed.

Detailed Description of Blythe Junction

One of the best available accountings of Blythe Junction was written by Grady Setzler, the author of *Another Wilderness Conquered* published in 1967. Setzler was editor and eventually owner of the Palo Verde Times from 1928 until 1965. Blythe is best described as being surrounded by the Palo Verde Valley, and was commonly traveled through on the direct 41-mile route to Blythe Junction.

Cyanide plant near Blythe Junction; conceivably at Poplin Mine

Setzler described Blythe Junction as a lawless town in need of a good sheriff. In typical Wild West fashion, the town had plenty of entertainment and limited law enforcement, which featured alcohol, prostitutes, and card games that often ended badly. Many of the problems were a direct result of a dispute between San Bernardino and Riverside Counties; and with no request coming from the local inhabitants for help; no sustainable assistance was ever given. As such, both counties took little interest in resolving Blythe Junction’s jurisdictional dispute, that was, until economic necessities required them to do so.

Fantastic Floyd Brown and the Development of the Railroad

So why did Setzler describe Floyd Brown as being fantastic? A little background might help us better understand.

Floyd stood 6’4” tall and came from Texas to the Mohave Desert about 1900. Floyd married Jessie well before they both entered the desert area around Blythe Junction, which first developed around the regions sparse mining that was greatly enhanced after the California Southern Railroad Company brought service to the town in 1910. Floyd and Jessie were an instrumental part of the areas development and benefited from it. In truth, in one of his many dealings, Floyd made a great deal of money in 1911 when he sold his mining rights to the American Gypsum Company for $7,000; this site would eventually become known as the town of Midland.

Floyd Brown

According to Tom Pederson, author of *Riverman Desertman*, sometime before Floyd became a wealthy man he was forced to toil in the desert. After being told he could no longer use Bud Gray's well water, Floyd was forced to find his own water source to work his mine, which was located at the north end of the Eureka Mountain.

Out of immediate need, Floyd and Jessie dug a 300-foot well by hand southwest of Blythe Junction. Floyd worked down in the hole while Jessie turned the windlass, which lowered and lifted Floyd and brought up dirt. In order to get light into the well hole, Floyd improvised a unique, yet unknown, mirror system. The couple eventually employed mule power, especially as the well hole got increasingly lower.

Nevertheless, concerns by Jessie forced Floyd to ask Henry Hartman to help with the last 100 feet. Apparently, Jessie did not want to lower Floyd down the 200 foot hole anymore, and refused to help finish the project. As such, Jessie forced Floyd to bring in Henry to complete the last 100 feet of the well. Henry was an experienced well digger who had already sunk the Midway Well, Shavers Well, Riley's Well, and helped with the Gruendike's Well.

The Brown well that Floyd and Jessie and Hartman completed lasted until the war years of 1942-43, when Army engineers filled it for fear that someone might fall in while conducting military maneuvers. In essence, the Brown well was the basis for future development of Blythe Junction, and clearly demonstrated the lengths necessary to attain water in the region around the expanding town.

The ever-resilient Floyd also developed a shorter road to the closest parker railroad cutoff, which was about 25 miles shorter than the Glamis road. The road went over the Eureka Mountain summit, went to the Brown Well, and than headed north to Blythe Junction. This road was the primary route Floyd used to haul freight from the Palo Verde Valley to Blythe Junction between the years of 1909 to

1915. Between these years, until the railroad completed the line to Blythe, Blythe Junction was the closest location to the rich agricultural Palo Verde Valley. The railroad connected to Blythe in October 1916 and the city of Blythe incorporated in June of the same year.

Between the years 1909 and 1915, Floyd and his wife Jessie were instrumental in the economic development of Blythe Junction, and were vital suppliers for the workers of the railroad, which was building a rail line to the town.

Furthermore, Mrs. Wilson initially ran Brown's restaurant before she got married in 1912; but a after her marriage she left, whereupon Jessie ran the restaurant, which soon added a rooming house, with a basement for gambling, and smaller buildings for privately entertaining men. The Brown establishment initially sold illegal alcohol, but after the first raid on the town they stopped; although they continued their rooming, gambling and entertainment practices.

There were said to be eighteen graves just outside of the Brown establishment on Shoe Hill Cemetery; none of which died naturally. One particular incident occurred against the postmaster and deputy sheriff, Dave Moreno, who died from a head wound after showing affection to Floyd's wife Jessie. The explanation given was that he had fallen off the station platform and died from a head injury. Floyd was not around; although, several of his friends did not like what Moreno was doing and warned him earlier that evening. One can only speculate about what actually happened.

Goldie Williams ran another gambling hall as well as girls for the trade, as did Wingy Smith's place; Williams was a mean unsociable man, unlike Wingy who was well liked. There were three essential reasons for going to Blythe Junction, women, gambling, and supplies. There were also two solitary shacks on the outskirts of the town that were run by independent women.

A prostitute named Cricket owned the first shack, and Grace, who worked for Jessie as a chambermaid and unlicensed surgeon, owned the second shack. Grace, who was half black and about 35 years old, was said to be from the east, where she was a surgical nurse. When asked why she went to Blythe Junction, she replied that no one wanted her, neither white nor black men. Grace often allowed women to conduct prostitution in her shack as a means to earning extra money.

On more than one occasion Grace helped save a life; in fact, once there was a fight between two men over the affections of Cricket the prostitute. One of the men got himself cut across the abdomen with his intestines hanging out. Grace fixed the six-inch cut, and told him that he was lucky that his intestines were not damaged. Normally though, all Grace had to fix was the occasional facial cuts that came from fights, which were a common occurrence in Blythe Junction. Grace carried a small satchel with her most of the time. In the satchel she had surgical instruments, including needles and shiny metal tools for almost any type of injury. She was also known for delivering babies.

Grace was identified as a calm woman – that was until one day her boyfriend left her for the new cook; she chased him into Jessie’s basement where she fired a .45 caliber side arm into the gamblers where he was hiding. No one was hurt, but her boyfriend left Blythe Junction that night. Lucky for her former boyfriend, Grace was unfamiliar with guns.

As mentioned earlier, the now illustrious raid that occurred on April 1, 1914 in Blythe Junction put Jessie Brown and Camiel Dekens in shackles. It was both Riverside and San Bernardino Counties that came on this occasion, which involved seven deputies from San Bernardino and six from Riverside.

In reality, the basement of Jessie’s casino was used as the holding cell, with nine women, three bootleggers, and several gamblers held there. Even though Camiel was a freight driver, he was arrested as well. Camiel and Grace were asked to help feed the deputies, but Grace would not do it without a drink of Alcohol first. All the prisoners were kept in the basement for 48 hours before they were transported to Riverside by the next train.

After their release, the girls were fined and told not to return to Blythe Junction. Jessie, the gamblers, and bootleggers were also fined; however, they returned to Blythe Junction immediately after. On the way back, Jessie and the returning prisoners were said to have stowed 36 cases of whisky and 30 barrels of beer. New girls followed within a few days and the older girls returned in about two months, when everything seemed to get back to normal.

Floyd Brown was known as a skirt chaser and was always willing to use his money and influence to get a woman. He was especially known for going after married women; although, he also skirted single women, it mattered little to him. He had no scruples when it came to gaining a woman’s attention. In time, however, Jessie and Floyd saw less and less of each other. Jessie was suspected of knowing of Floyd’s activities and, in time, she did the same; but it was Floyd who eventually filed for divorce after finding out about her extra marital activities.

Sadly, after the divorce Jessie began to drink more and more until she finally ended up in a hospital for the insane in Los Angeles; and to this day, Camiel Dekens still wonders where she buried her money in Blythe Junction. Floyd Brown would go onto become a prominent citizen in Blythe, California.

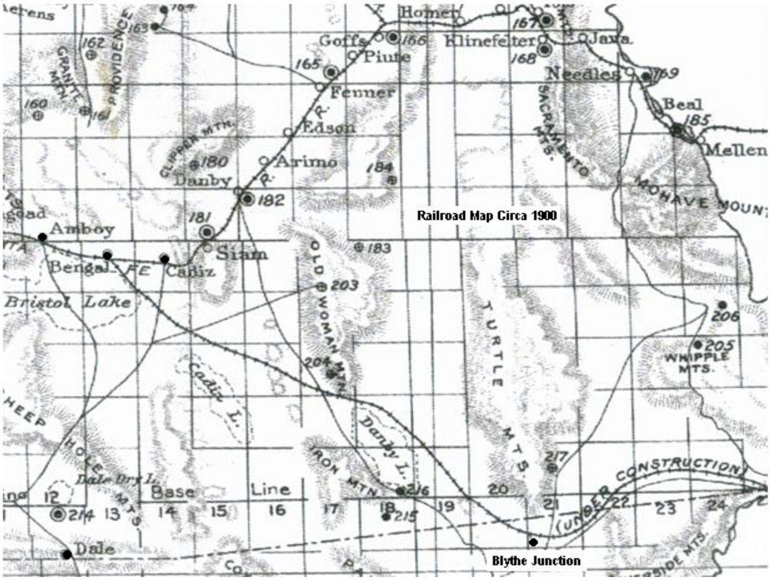
Construction of the Railroad

The first stretch of track that went through Blythe Junction was completed in 1910, and within a few years construction of a fork to Blythe started on April 1, 1915, and reached its destination by August 8, 1916.

Of interest, in 1895, the following railroad towns (see map below) were developed within No Man’s Land, primarily as water stops for the trains; Blythe Junction was included about 1900 when the railroad stop was develop:

- Amboy had no post office, but had a railroad office and an express office.
- Bagdad had a post office and a railroad office and an express office.
- Bristol had no post office, but had a railroad office and an express office.
- Cadiz had no post office but had a railroad office and an express office.
- Danby had no post office, but had a railroad office and an express office.
- Edson had no post office, but had a railroad office and an express office.
- Fenner had no post office, but had a railroad office and an express office.

Of particular interest to some historians and conspiracy buffs, the construction of the railroad from Blythe Junction to Blythe started exactly one year, to the day, from the joint Riverside and San Bernardino County raid on Blythe Junction. In this raid, almost the entire inhabitants of Blythe Junction were arrested for conducting illegal activities, including prostitution, gambling, distribution of illegal alcohol, including moonshine. There is little doubt that Riverside and San Bernardino County and railroad officials had a vested interest in the development of Blythe Junction and were determined to clean up this Wild West town.


Railroad Map Circa 1900
Blythe Junction
Homer
Goffs
Piute
Klinefelter
Java
Needles
Beal
Mellen
Fenner
Edson
Arimo
Danby
Amboy
Siam
Bengal
Cadiz
Bristol Lake
Cadiz L.
Danby L.
Dale Dry L.
Dale
Base Line
Granite Mtn.
Providence
Clipper Mtn.
Old Woman Mtn.
Iron Mtn.
Turtle Mts.
Sacramento Mts.
Mohave Moun
Whipple Mts.
Sheep Hole Mts.
(Under Construction)

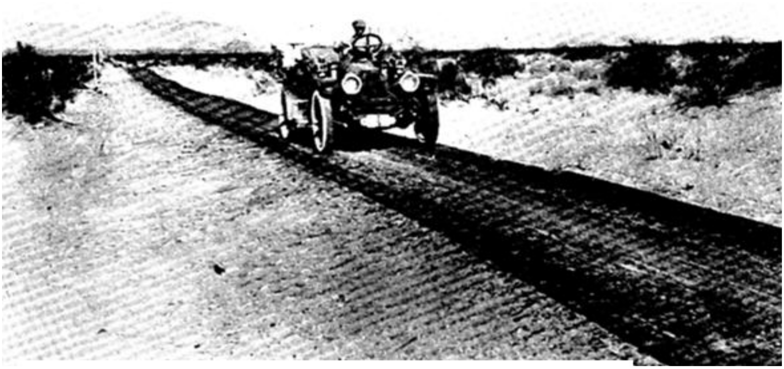
There was, however, good reason for this raid. Several weeks before the actual start of construction of the railroad to Blythe, the community of Blythe Junction actually rioted. On March 11, 1915 several men were reportedly killed and wounded, while rioters took control of the railroad building and cut the telegraph wires. Special Santa Fe Railroad agents were sent in by rail to restore order.

Clean Up Blythe Junction and Change the Name

It has to be surmised that with plans for a railway station in the township, came calls from both counties to clean up Blythe Junction; otherwise the raid by police in 1914 and the development of the railroad between 1910 and 1915 was a pure coincidence. A cheap and reliable rail system would benefit both San Bernardino and

Riverside Counties economically. By bringing crops and mined minerals to market in a timely manner, county officials certainly hoped to spur economic development of a yet untapped area in California. Thus, it has to be concluded that the railroad spurred the clean up of Blythe Junction, and with it came its new name, Rice.

Plank Road



Plank Road between Blythe Junction and Mesaville

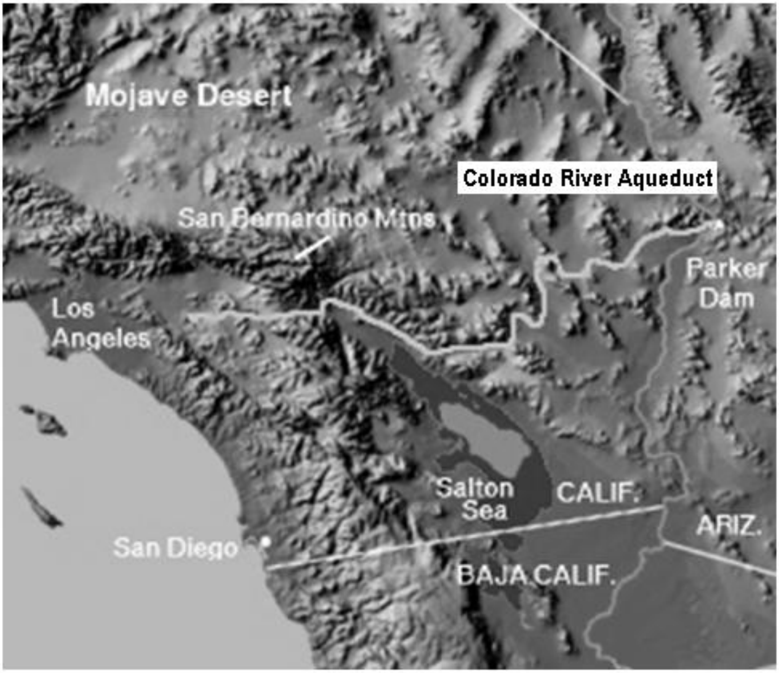
Horses were the primary source for transportation throughout the Blythe Junction-Rice area until the development of the automobile, and train rails to the area. For a time, there were few reliable roads; although out of necessity, a unique three-mile long plank road with two turnouts was built between Mesaville and Blythe Junction. Loose sand necessitated the building of the plank road in 1903 for the transportation of heavy machine equipment. The plank road saw extensive use before the railroad came to Blythe Junction between 1910 and 1915. In time, however, the railroad became the primary source for transportation, which hindered the need for the plank road; and after a while the road fell into despair, and in due course, local roads were paved over, thereby increasing reliability, which decreased the need for the railroad as well as the plank road.

Wyatt Earp and his Mine

After 1902, Wyatt Earp moved to Vidal, which lies about twenty-three miles east/southeast of Blythe Junction-Rice. Earp, perhaps best known for the OK Corral shootout in Tombstone Arizona, had a fascination for mining and gambling. Earp's mining attraction brought him to Vidal, where he built a home, and mined the mountain regions in the area. He discovered gold and copper on several of his claims, which enabled him to frequent the Hollywood area in the hotter months of the year. Because of Vidal's close location and Earp's propensity to gamble, it seems probable that he might have visited Blythe Junction-Rice to gamble with the locals.

Later Years

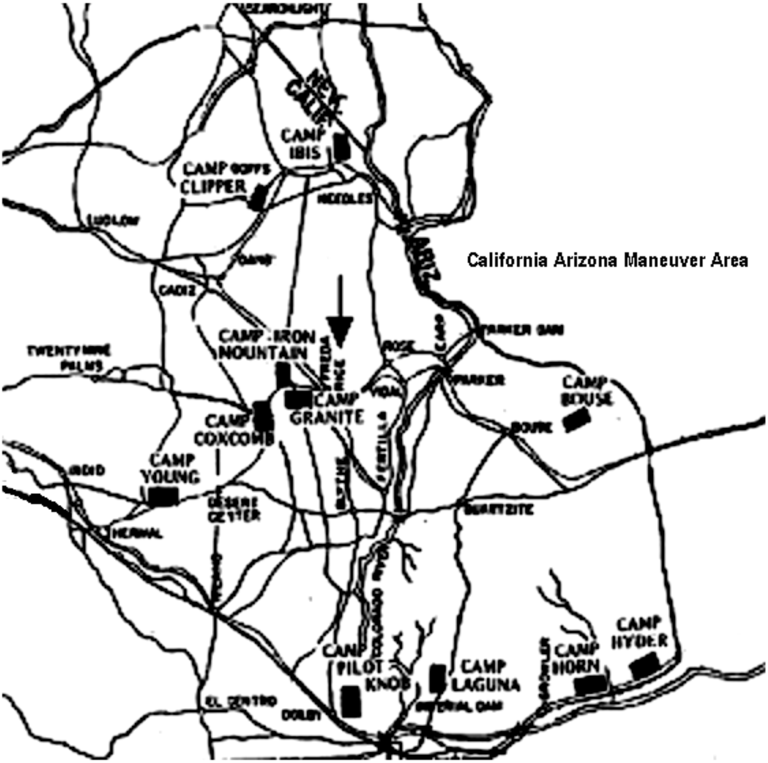
During construction of the Colorado River Aqueduct in the early 1930s, which parallels much of State Route 62, Rice was busy on weekend nights as hundreds of hard-rock miners and construction workers came looking for fun. During the prohibition years (1919 through 1933), Rice was apparently known as a place where potent moonshine was easily obtained. During the early years, and just before World War II, the area was also a center of military training activities with the extensive Rice Airbase to the southeast.


Mojave Desert
Colorado River Aqueduct
San Bernardino Mtns
Parker Dam
Los Angeles
Salton Sea
CALIF.
ARIZ.
San Diego
BAJA CALIF.

As well, toward the end of the 1930s, the Radioplane Company developed a sequence of radio-controlled model airplanes to be used as aerial targets as antiaircraft targets for the Army Air Corps.

Starting in February 21, 1938, Dale Dry Lake was used by the Radioplane Company to demonstrate its drone model plains to the United States Army. The Army ordered 53 drones in November 1939, in spite of several earlier failures. Full production started in 1941 at Radioplane's Van Nuys production facility.

In 1942, General George S. Patton set up the Desert Training Center at Camp Young. While flying over Southern California, Patton pointed to his map and identified nine initial sites in California for military training; Clipper, Ibis, Iron Mountain, Granite, Coxcomb, Rice Army Airfield, Pilot Knob, and Camp Young, which was the headquarters. The original intent of the Desert Training Center was to create a mock invasion of Los Angeles, but the United States Military had other ideas within this operation as well.


California Arizona Maneuver Area
NEV.
CALIF.
CAMP IBIS
CAMP CLIPPER
GOFFS
NEEDLES
LUDLOW
CADIZ
ARIZ.
PARKER DAM
CAMP IRON MOUNTAIN
RICE
TWENTYNINE PALMS
ROSE
VIDAL
PARKER
CAMP BOUSE
BOUSE
CAMP GRANITE
CAMP COXCOMB
INDIO
CAMP YOUNG
DESERT CENTER
BLYTHE
QUARTZITE
COLORADO RIVER
CAMP PILOT KNOB
CAMP LAGUNA
CAMP HORN
CAMP HYDER
EL CENTRO
IMPERIAL DAM

The primary goal was of course to test men in harsh conditions, but it also wanted to test its supply, communications, and transportation abilities. The Desert Training Center started in March of 1942. The name was eventually changed to the California Arizona Maneuver Area, when Arizona was included; and the whole operation ended April 30, 1944. While the total number of men who entered the area for training varies, estimates totaled well over one million men.

The sites Patton chose were primarily based on their location to local rail lines, and locations to available water, which was enhanced greatly by the local aqueduct line completed a few years earlier. In fact, there is a great story about Patton appearing in front of the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California (MWD) in early 1942. After listening to Patton present his water needs, the MWD politely stated they would consider his request and get back to him within a few months. However, in true Patton form, he stated that he was only present to inform the MWD that he had already started using their water, and that he did not have time for any bureaucratic nonsense.

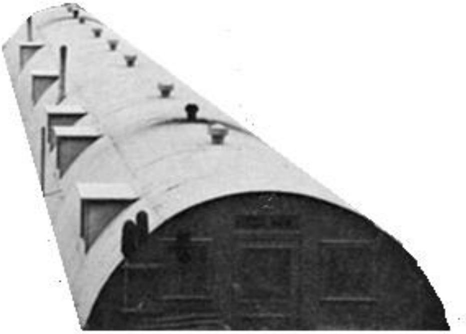
In the fall of 1941, the Air Support Section of the Air Force Combat Command envisioned a system of airfields, which would support ground troops. Each corps headquarters would have an adjacent airbase, with each division post having a smaller airbase, which was normally equipped as an observation squadron. When applied to the Desert Training Center maneuver area, we see that Rice Army Air Field was used as an observation squadron. It could only house 20 officers and 100 enlisted men, whereas full operational support bases often housed more than 200 officers and 2,200 enlisted men. Thus, Rice Army Airfield was a sub-base, used for auxiliary support.

According to Fred Robinson, the Yardmaster for the Southern Pacific Railroad in Colton, California, as many as 50 to 80 cars each night were forwarded to the Desert Training Center area. On many occasions, there were so many cars present that troops were sent along just in case they had to be stored on a siding. The main offloading point for all equipment in the area was a siding called Freda, which is about three miles east of Rice, just north of highway 62. Men were often sent to other Camps, but most remember arriving at Freda first, as did most equipment to the area. In truth, Walter Smith recalled it took 600 Pullman cars to move one division of 15,000 men, and that army transportation specialists moved 20-ton tanks and guns on and off the one loading ramp with precision. The vicinity known as Freda was the largest of Patton's training areas, which had four camps; Rice, Iron Mountain, Granite, and

Coxcomb were all close in proximity. In actuality, Rice was only three miles away and was the hub for outgoing travel to Blythe, Parker, and Phoenix.

There are several urban legends about Patton burying tanks and equipment in the desert training area; but according to Walter Smith, who was at all major troop moves in 1942, 1943, and 1944, the only account of anything being buried was when Freda was closed in 1944; everything, but tanks and guns, were buried in a bulldozed trench on the north side of the camp.

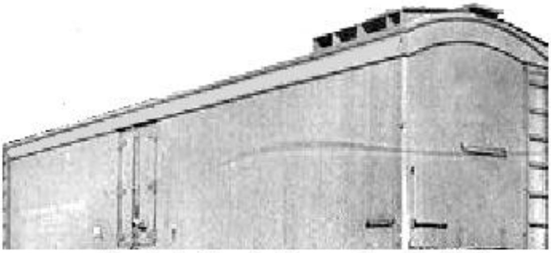
World's Largest Bar



A typical Quonset hut during World War II

During the years of 1942–1944, Rice had perhaps the world's largest air-conditioned bar. Three Quonset hut buildings held the 180-foot bar and had a huge desert type cooler. The cooler was mounted 50 feet from the end of the bar on a tower with a large pipe that carried cool air down its length. Rice was the most popular local location for the approximately 160,000 troops stationed at Rice, Iron Mountain, Granite Coxcomb, and Freda.

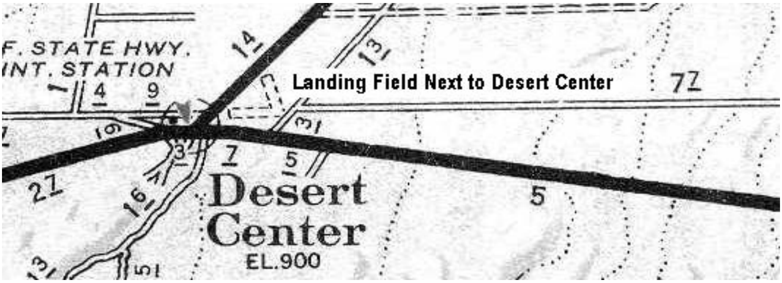
Refrigerated Morgue



A standard refrigerated transport car circa 1940s

Large refrigerated boxcars were brought into several of the camps to rehydrate those men who had been stricken by the heat, over exertion and for not drinking enough water. They were so popular that men were placed in racks much like a morgue for up to 24 hours at a time, or whenever they were able to return to active duty. Those who experienced training in many of these camps had a saying, “The men that trained in the desert are sure to go to heaven, because they have done their stretch in hell.”

Of interest, Kyle Nichols and Paul Blierman published their research about Camp Iron Mountain with the *Geological Society of America* in 2001. According to Nichols and Blierman the effects of Patton’s troop presence between 1942 and 1944 had a lasting effect on the terrain. According to regulation AR 200-2 the Army is required to monitor the environmental effects of training on arid regions. Their results determined, ”After two intense years of military activity and 54 subsequent years of recovery, channels in affected areas still have not returned to natural geometries.” Arial views of Rice Air Field and Camp Rice also demonstrate environmental damage from Patton’s Desert Training Center military maneuvers from the 1940s, as do all the camps.



Desert Center abandoned schoolhouse; next to old airstrip

There were several other notable military bases in the area, including an airbase at Desert Center. Interestingly, in addition to the Desert Center Army Air Field (located 5 miles to the northeast), part of what looks like an old airstrip can still be seen from the air, and runs in front of the, now abandoned, old school house, which was built many years later; even though the actually military air base lays to the north.

Old World War II airstrip; now a road in Desert Center

Desert Center building that looks like an old airfield structure

24 HR
SERVICE

Old abandoned gas station in Desert Hot Springs

Old swimming pool in Desert Center

As well, Morton Air Academy was located in Blythe and could train as many as 550 pilots at one time. The Academy trained fighter pilots during World War II, with training sessions normally lasting about 90 days. The Air Academy closed after the war and eventually became a community college, followed by a high school.

When the Blythe Airbase was completed it had over 650 buildings on site; although troops were transported to the base long before it was completed. Many troops had to camp in tents with temperatures well into the 110 plus degree weather.

The Blythe Airbase was home to the 390th Bomber Group during World War II, and was also used to train heavy bomber crews of the Second Air Force, which flew B-17s and B-24s. The Blythe Airbase also played an important role in Patton's training in the Desert Training Center area.

Desert Center, like Blythe lies right on the border of No Mans Land, and both communities, unlike others within the region, have remained. Desert Center is hanging on by a thread, but due to its location next to the busy interstate 10 freeway, is still used as a rest stop. And Blythe also lies next to the 10 freeway and is on the border with Arizona and continues to thrive as a result.

Blythe Army Airbase hanger, circa 1930s

Chevron
BLYTHE AVIATION

Old Blythe Airbase hanger 2010

Perhaps an old radio tower and equipment room

Another view of the radio tower and equipment room

BLYTHE AIRPORT
TERMINAL

BLYTHE AIRPORT
TERMINAL

Old Blythe Airport Terminal

However, many communities in the heart of No Man’s Land are but a mystery to us today, including Amboy, Archer, Baghdad, Bolo, Bristol, Bush, Cadiz, Calzona, Chambless, Chubbuck, Cox, Dale [Old, Middle & New], Danby, Desert Center, Eagle Mountain, Edson, Earp, Essex, Fenner, Freda, Fertilla, Grommet, Hayfield, Inca, Mesaville, Midland, Milligan, Rice [Blythe Junction], Sablon, Saltus, and Vidal; some of which will be mentioned later in this book.

This publication will now explore some of the more popular stories and tales from this lost area of the American Southwest – No Man’s Land California.

Chapter 2

Location of No Man's Land

The United States did not gain official control of No Man's Land California until 1848, when Mexico was defeated in the Mexican-American war; but this initial control meant little to the various Indians who traveled the area seasonally. There were four prominent tribes who lived in and frequented the area, the Serrano, Cahuilla, Chemehuevi and Mohave Indians. The first known American expedition to the region was conducted by Henry Washington between 1854 and 1865, followed by extensive mining in the area thereafter.

Greetings from
RICE
CALIFORNIA

Circa 1930s Rice postcard

There have been many surveys of the Blythe Junction-Rice area for over a hundred years. The Spanish were perhaps the first to survey the area; however, for the United States, the Whipple Expedition in the 1860s was the first official survey. It was this survey that helped the United States Army develop a series of military post in the Mohave Desert, all of which surrounded No Man's Land, with no posts entering the area; most stayed near the Colorado River and available water sources. Railroad company geologists conducted the earliest large-scale geological analysis of the Rice/Vidal valley area in the 1950s, and in the mid 1970s Southern California Edison had geologist map out the area for a possible nuclear plant; yet due to political misgivings by the public, and a lack of cheap water in the area, the project never got off the ground. The late 1970's saw an additional survey by the U.S. Geological Society, which was done to evaluate mineral resources for the Bureau of Land Management, which wanted to better understand the future economic potential for the area.

Blythe Junction 1914

Very little is written about human activity in No Man's Land California, however, one of the more famous firsthand accounts of the area was written by Author and naturist J. Smeaton Chase, who wrote *California Desert Trails* and traveled parts of the Mohave Desert on horseback before his book was published in 1919.

In his accounts, he visited Twentynine Palms, Dale and La Paz, which is located less than an hour's drive from Blythe Junction, now known today as the ruins of Rice. Of particular interest is his account of the population of both Twentynine Palms and Dale, which stood at two people in Twentynine Palms and "Fifty to sixty men, half dozen women, a half-score of children, and one badly spoiled baby" in Dale. Additionally, according to Chase, the Dale site he visited was the third Dale, which contradicts the commonly held local belief that there were only two Dale's, Old Dale, and New Dale.

The question must be asked, why did Chase not travel to Blythe Junction? Like many travelers, written accounts seem to go around Blythe Junction, with few ever traveling through this desolate area. Chase's own words might help resolve this question. Chase described Twentynine Palms,

> Twenty-nine Palms is still a base for prospectors in the desert ranges, on account of its water, which is plentiful and good, and by reason of being on one of the roads to the still important mining settlement of Dale.

Chase confirmed tales of Dale being a friendly place, with everyone accepting him, feeding him, and giving his horse and him shelter. Chase wrote,

> That friendly chap at once took charge of me as of an expected guest: insisted on my taking his room for his own, and quartered Kaweah (his horse) in the company stable. Other conveniences were offered by the resident doctor, and in effect I was made free of the camp… We left Dale amid the good wishes of a score of men.

Road to Blythe Junction, 1914

Chase described dale as a village of assorted buildings, made up mostly of temporary shacks and cabins. There was no resemblance of order, with most buildings located at random. There was a store with a kitchen and a dinning room. The cashier's office was made of stone and was the most sizable building in Dale. The post office shared a building with the clubroom, which proudly displayed a pool table for entertainment. There was a "blind pig" in Dale, which was an illegal drinking establishment, and due to Riverside County's drinking prohibition the town was a popular place for miners seeking alcohol and entertainment.

Atop of Dale, which is located in the mountain range above the two older Dale's, Chase described the terrain he would have to travel if he had decided to go through,

> The view to the north was memorable as an example of the ultra-desolate. Beyond the ragged brown foreground lay the pale gray expanse of a dry lake, whitened near its center by the alkaline deposit from its vanished waters. Beyond that rose the ashy wall of the Sheephole Mountains, quite lunar in their look of geologic age and dreariness. A thread-like line that skirted the lake bed and faded in a gap of the hills marked the road to Amboy, forty miles away, Dale's shortest link with the rest of the world.

A couple of issues must be resolved to better understand what Chase was looking at. First off, the dry lake Chase mentioned is actually slightly northeast of the newest Dale, and Amboy would have actually been north. To the right of Chase's view, eastward, would be the route taken to Blythe Junction, an estimated 50 miles away. Chase, however, decided not to travel to either Amboy or Blythe Junction, perhaps for the reasons described above. The terrain is still harsh today, and even with modern conveniences – travelers, even now, perish due to a lack of preparedness. Thus, for Chase to travel on horseback, especially during the summer months seemed perhaps impossible. There might, however, be additional points to consider. Chase was not surprised to learn that Dale was friendly; as such, it is almost certain Chase had done his research before entering the area. Therefore, he would have also known about the reputation Blythe Junction had; murder, prostitution, gambling and illegal drinking were common activities in Blythe Junction, which stood in stark contrast to Dale.

Chase decided to travel south of the Coxcombs, yet he still gives a distressful depiction of his travels,

> Hours passed in stupefying heat while I alternately dozed in the saddle or dragged the apathetic Kaweah along at a

> snail-like pace. The creosotes moved listlessly when for a moment the wind came with a furnace-like breath. There was little comfort in the canteen, for the water was unpleasantly hot, and the vacant shell of a tortoise, or bleeding ribs of cattle, were objects not interesting to a jaded mind.

Blythe Junction stands at about 976 feet above sea level and sits in what is called Rice Valley today. Turtle Mountain is to the north; Coxcomb Mountain to the south and Iron Mountain is to the west. It is clear why Chase, like many earlier travelers, did not want to travel through the area of Blythe Junction; a lack of water and excessive heat often reached the 130-degree range.

Chase illustrated his point when he referred to a man named Riley who had lost his life a few years earlier, because he got lost and ran out of water on the way from Dale to Mecca. As the story goes, Riley's brother also lost his life while traveling from Dale to Amboy. According to Chase, there were few markers and no water on these routes, which made even known travel routes hazardous. This was common knowledge to even Chase, who stated people commonly died while trying to travel the area.

Another important suggestion Chase made was to bring along a pick, shovel, bucket, and a rope for cleaning wells. Apparently, wells often became choked by debris, which were washed in during a rainstorm, or became contaminated by desert animals that were trapped and died in the water.

Of particular interest to our tale was Chase's travel to the forgotten town of La Paz, Arizona. La Paz was once a thriving town of over 5,000 people, but by 1891, it had become a ghost town. In essence, the once mighty Colorado River flooded and removed what remained of the town, and by the time Chase visited La Paz the last remaining structure was a small circular stone formation.

As mentioned previously, to the north of Blythe Junction is the mountain range known as Turtle Mountain. The Turtle Mountain Range is positioned in one of the hottest, driest, and most remote sections of the Mohave Desert. This area was commonly traveled by the Halchidoma, Chemehuevi and Mohave Indians, as well as other related natives well into the modern era. The mountain area was a known hunting ground for bighorn sheep and other game. Indian encampments were established throughout the areas numerous natural springs; and Indian artifacts, like arrowheads and pottery fragments, can still be found today.

It is hypothesized by many historians that the Spanish may have done a survey of the area, despite the fact that there are no records of a survey; for it is common knowledge that Spain conducted expeditions throughout the area; and urban legends remain today that claim they buried gold treasure in the northern part of Turtle Mountain.

Terrible Coxcombs:

In 1941, Edwin Corle, the author of *Desert Country*, referred to an area between Twentynine Palms and Blythe Junction (Rice) as the Coxcomb Range, "sometimes known as the terrible Coxcombs." According to Corle, the Coxcomb Range, which surrounds Blythe Junction, is something of a mystery. He does not understand why anyone would enter the region, "There is no water in this area at all; the oldest and newest maps show no springs anywhere in the Coxcomb Range."

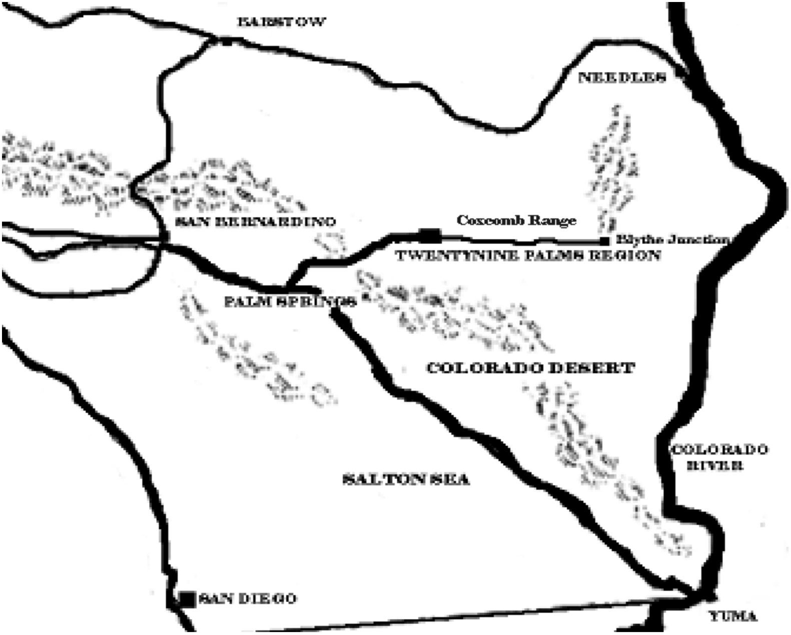
Additionally, Corle referred to statements from prospectors who once talked about the area as being incredibly tough. In spite of accounts from miners, other than Ore Mining, Corle refused to believe there was any viable mining activity in the Coxcomb Range, in spite of mining efforts and tales from the past. For good reason, because there was no reliable water source at the time, the earliest pioneers bypassed the Coxcomb Range all together, often going south or north of the area.

Railroads through the area were not developed in the vicinity of Blythe Junction until about 1910, much later than the surrounding areas to the south and north. It seems obvious to your author that the development of Blythe Junction occurred haphazardly, with little development coming for good reason. Blythe Junction laid midway between Needles and Twentynine Palms, and was perhaps developed only out of necessity. And as we will discover, few people wanted to endure the harsh environment, and those who did, did so only out of need.

It is interesting to look at maps of the first Spanish expeditions in the area. Spanish explorers first established themselves in San Diego in 1769, and by 1776 they had charted most of the trails in the southern and coastal regions of California. It became immediately obvious why no one, even the Spanish, traveled the Coxcomb Range. The Spanish took the more hospitable areas to the south (Yuma) and to the north (Cajon Pass), avoiding the Coxcomb Region by connecting with the Colorado River. Even into the 1840's and the gold rush of 1849, pioneers and prospectors avoided the Coxcomb Range, often taking the popular Old Spanish Trail route, well to the north, or the popular southern Yuma route. There was little change from 1849 to 1869, with pioneers and prospectors relying on the reliable northern and southern routes of travel, again avoiding the Coxcomb Range for the most part. Yet, between 1860 and 1880, a thriving stagecoach system did bring travel through the tips of the Coxcomb Range, but none ventured into its heart.

There were no stagecoach offices in the territory in 1860, but there were three by 1880. Of noteworthy interest, there were also no United States Military Posts in the Coxcomb Range vicinity between the years of 1847 and 1900, but several existed to the south and to the north; which made sense because travelers avoided No Man's Land.

A modified drawing of an archeological survey map


BARSTOW
NEEDLES
SAN BERNARDINO
Coxcomb Range
Blythe Junction
TWENTYNINE PALMS REGION
PALM SPRINGS
COLORADO DESERT
COLORADO RIVER
SALTON SEA
SAN DIEGO
YUMA

of the Twentynine Palms Region

Of interest, Riverside County was created in 1893 from sections of San Diego and San Bernardino counties, which created the bases for future Blythe Junction disputes between San Bernardino and Riverside counties, also known as No Man's Land by both jurisdictions.

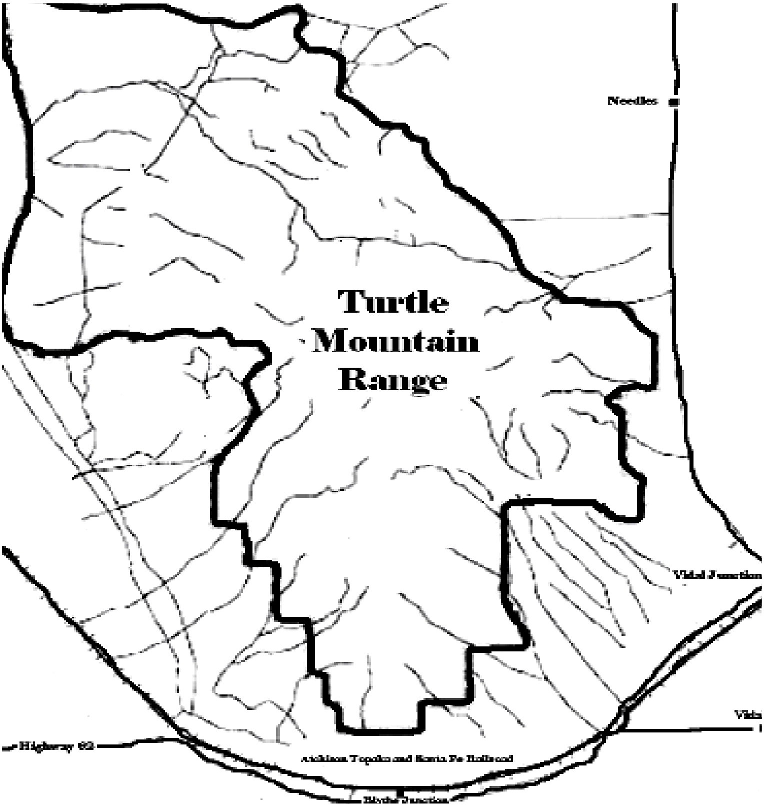
It is implicitly understood that the areas surrounding Blythe Junction (Rice) were formable and few explorers ever ventured into this harsh territory. As Corle mentioned above, there were no known watering holes to rely on, which made travel impractical. As such, those who entered had perhaps uncommon reasons for doing so.

Furthermore, it is speculated that the name Rice Valley is a rather modern term, and that before 1941 Rice Valley was referred to as being a part of the Coxcomb Range. Several accounts seem to refer to the Rice Valley and the Coxcomb Range as one region. In fact, an account from 1943 indicated that Camp Coxcomb, a military base during World War II, which was located northeast of the Coxcomb Mountains, was situated about 5 miles east of Blythe Junction. United States 95th Division history stated,

> The Division [95th] began its California directed movement October 11, preceded by an advance detachment, which took over Camp Coxcomb in the California desert. Coxcomb was a tent city, spread out in rectangular unit areas along a stretch of desert grass-studded sand, sloping slightly to the east from the piles of corrugated rock that had been named the Coxcomb Range.

As well, it was reported in *The Kingston Spy*, Kingston Wisconsin on Dec 27, 1943, "The name of this camp is Camp Coxcomb, named after the Coxcomb Mountain Range that runs through this part of the desert."

To better understand the confusion between Blythe Junction and the surrounding areas, Elizabeth Crozer Campbell, who authored *An Archeological Survey of the Twenty Nine Palms Region in 1931*, said that Blythe Junction fell under the Twenty Nine Palms region. This research predates the published works of Corle by ten years, but gives references to a statement given in 1853 by an army surveyor. However, her research was only conducted within twenty-five miles of the Oasis of Mara in Twentynine Palms, which falls short of the distance to Blythe Junction (Rice) by about 50 miles.


Needles
Turtle Mountain Range
Vidal Junction
Vida
Highway 62
Atchison Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad
Blythe Junction

Turtle Mountain range to the north of Blythe Junction right next to the railroad

There is of course good reason to believe Campbell was talking about the area between the Mohave Desert to the north, the Colorado Desert to the south and the area between Twentynine Palms and the Colorado River, which Blythe Junction (Rice) lays within. Campbell quoted Lieutenant R.S. Williamson, who conducted the Railroad Survey in 1853,

> A mountain range extends from San Bernardino Mountains in a southeasterly direction nearly, if not quite, to the Colorado (River). Between these mountains, and the mountains of the Mohave (Desert) nothing is known of the country. I have never heard of a white man who had penetrated it. I am inclined to the belief that it is barren, mountainous desert composed of a system of basins and mountain

> ranges. It would be an exceedingly difficult country to explore on account of the absence of water and there is no rainy season of any consequence.

It would appear that Williamson did not travel into the area under discussion; rather he decided to forgo his survey of the area because of a lack of reliable water sources. Additionally, Williamson clearly defined the area, although he did not give it a name. However, Campbell did give it a name in her 1931 research; she broadly called it the Twenty Nine Palms Region. As mentioned above, Corle defined the same area as the Coxcomb Region, and today the Blythe Junction area is referred to as Rice Valley.

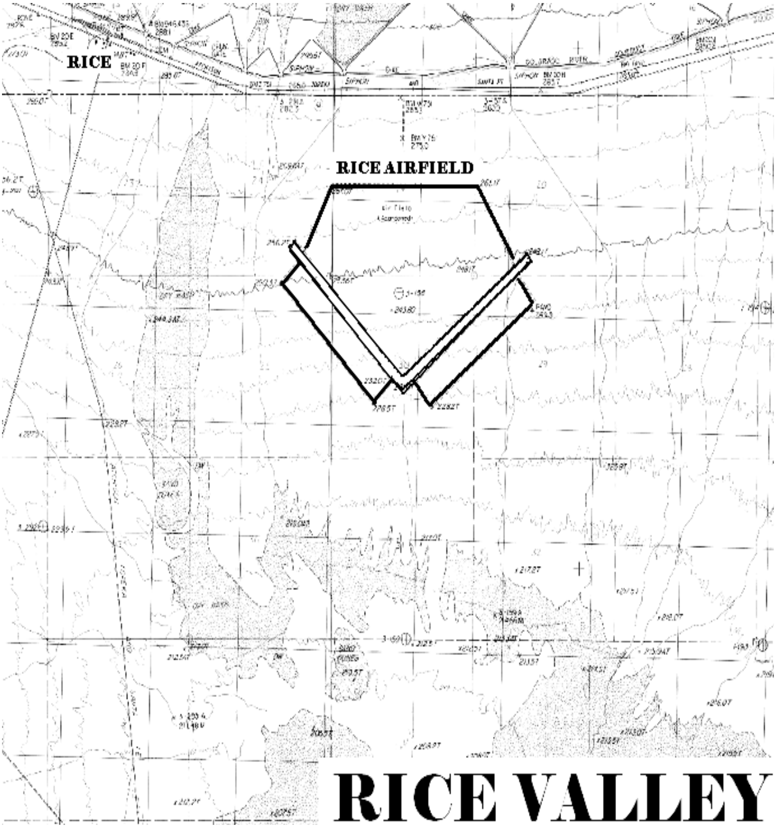
It is evident to your author that because of Industry and Governmental requirements, notably mining, farming, railroads, and environmentalist, a greater need has since better defined the area through extensive surveying. Thus, even today we have differing names for exact mountain and valley ranges, whereas, in the past the whole area was clumped into general terminologies.

To add even greater information to the matter, Blythe Junction laid slightly right of center in what is referred today as the Southern Mohave Desert.

Summit Post added additional details to the location and unnamed region surrounding Blythe Junction (Rice), which is near the bordering area between the Mohave Desert and the Colorado Desert,

> The CA Desert is comprised of two major desert ecosystems: the Mojave Desert and the Colorado Desert. The exact boundaries of the two are vague, but... The Mojave Desert runs from the very southern reaches of the Owens Valley (exact spot arguable, but somewhere near Coso the transition to Great Basin vegetation becomes clear), south to the base of the San Gabriel and San Bernardino Mountains, along the Little San Bernardino Mountains, and then on a diagonal line to Needles... An arbitrary elevational boundary would be that the Mojave Desert starts around 3000' or so.
>
> The exact boundary between the deserts is arguable and often debated, but the transition zone includes: Cottonwood, Pinto, Eagle, Sheephole, Coxcomb, Iron, Turtle, Old Woman, Piute, Sacramento, Chemehuevi, Whipple, and Dead Mountain Ranges. The Colorado Desert in turn goes

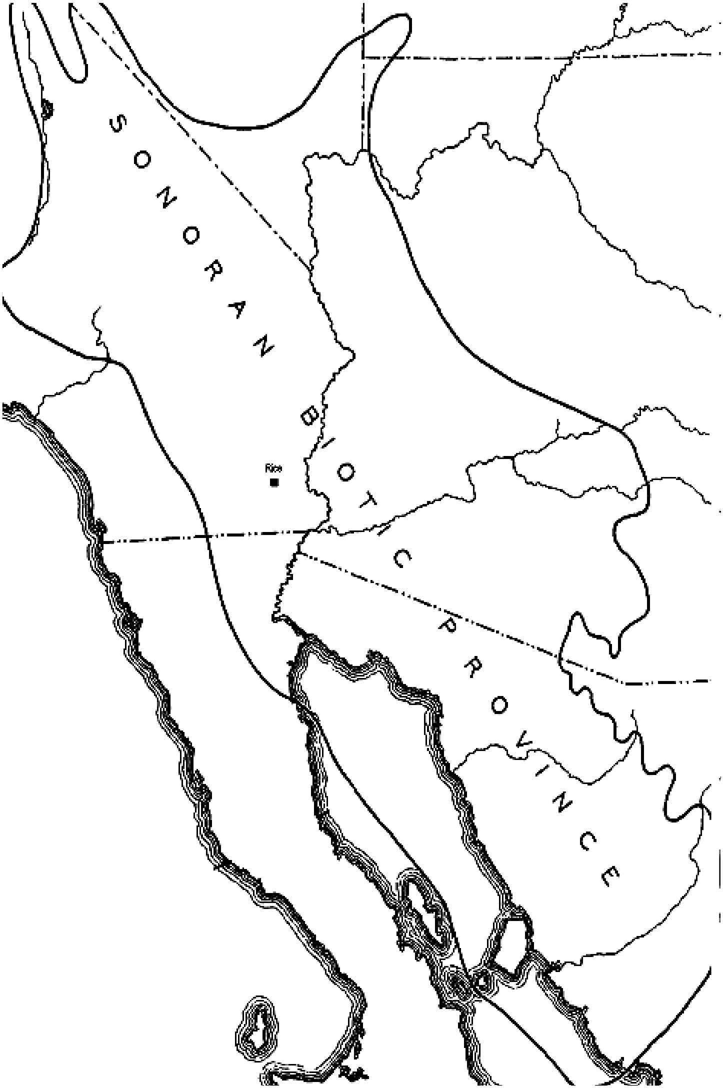
> south to the Mexican border, west to the San Jacinto/Santa Rosa/Laguna Mtn. crest, and east to the river.



South of Rice Valley is an area called Rice Valley wilderness. The U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management, gave a specific definition of the Rice Valley location,

> Location: Riverside County; 26 miles northwest of Blythe, California (Note: Boundary set backs from roads or trails are 30 to 300 feet).
>
> Area Description: The broad, flat plains of Rice Valley and the northwestern tip of the steep and rugged Big Maria Mountains lie within the borders of this wilderness. A system of small dunes rising 30 to 40 feet above the surface

form a long, narrow band running through the middle of the valley floor. The valley is part of a massive sand sheet, which extends from Cadiz Valley through Ward Valley, representing a part of one of the largest dune systems in the California Desert. The Big Maria Mountains rise above the valley to an elevation of 2,000 feet.



One of the previous maps of Rice Valley shows the "V" shaped location of Rice Airfield, which is located about 3 miles southeast of Blythe Junction (Rice). The mountain range to the north of Blythe Junction (Rice) is the Turtle Mountain Range, and the area to the south is referred to as Rice Valley Wilderness today.
Dune fields are also common over this arid section of No Man's Land, much like the Kelso Dunes to the northwest. Dunes are indicators of moisture; and the Colorado River is a barrier to the migration of the areas Dunes.

Blythe Junction (Rice) also lies within the Sonoran Biotic Province, which is bounded by the Gulf of Mexico/Baja, Western California, Southern Nevada and Utah, and Mexico (Including the Sonoran Province). Many of the areas within the Sonoran Biotic Providence are not well known and contain the continents most arid climate. Several of the mountain ranges cut off winds from the Pacific Ocean, which resulted in the desert area moving northward. The soils within the Sonoran plains are frequently fine in texture and gray in color. There are deposits of alkaline soils, which are often incrusted with salts. There are also many small and large rock formations, varying from granite to black lavas. The climate has high summer temperatures, low precipitation, and atmospheric humidity. Rain varies, but most coming during the summer months. Rain that comes during the winter is normally light and those that come during the summer are torrential. It is not uncommon to see several years without any rainfall, which, as discussed earlier, led to a lack of travel and economic development.

Location of No Man’s Land

Chapter 3

Lost Community of La Paz

In 1862, La Paz, Arizona was situated on the eastern side of the Colorado River across from California; it was about 180 miles north of Fort Yuma, almost directly west/southwest of what would one day become Blythe Junction (Rice). The population of La Paz was about 500 in 1862, and would rise to over 5,000 between 1865 and 1866 before it slowly started to die in the early 1870s. Gold and silver was known to be in the area on both sides of the Colorado River; however, there were no known ledges. Copper and salt were also discovered below La Paz.

The founder of La Paz was an old Mountain man going by the name Pauline Weaver, who continued to talk about rich deposits to the west of La Paz even as the town prospered. Accounts from the time period stated that adventurous prospectors also penetrated the desert areas to the west across the Colorado River into California.

Picture of La Paz, circa 1910

The La Paz mining district ran along the eastern (Arizona) side of the Colorado River, while the Chemahueva mining district ran along the western (California) side of the Colorado River, opposite La Paz City. In 1862, La Paz District had about 800 known miners. Steamers frequently delivered goods to La Paz, even though the river was unpredictable; regular freight costs were about three cents a pound. After the Colorado River changed course in 1870, La Paz was left without a landing, which resulted in the town's slow economic decline.

As prospectors arrived in La Paz, they quickly flocked into the surrounding hills and washes; and when the population reached 5,000 people, the community quickly grew to include over 270 blocks. It had been suggested that over 1.3 million ounces was recovered from the nearby hills and mountains, which would be over a billion dollars in value today (gold value reached $1,200 per ounce in 2009 and again in 2010).

For less than a decade La Paz housed miners, families, and merchants looking to make a quick buck; and those who followed miners into desolate areas like women of little virtue, gamblers, shysters and thieves.

La Paz, circa 1890s

La Paz was a typical placer gold mining town, which included some incredible stories. One such story said that in 1862 a gold placer nugget the size of a cabbage was discovered in nearby Ferra Gulch. Many of the miners originated from Mexico, who often returned there with their riches rather than report them to local officials, who they did not trust. As such, records were often informal and often misleading. Subsequently, any estimates about the amount of gold retrieved from La Paz are perhaps low.

On March 22, 1863 the *New York Times* reported that the Secretary of the Treasury received a letter from the Inspector of Customs in San Diego that gold, silver, and copper were being mined in La Paz, Arizona Territory. By the time of this publication there were several thousand prospectors already in La Paz to take advantage of this discovery, and that the population would grow in the coming months due to the strike. Additionally, according to George McKinstry this was the biggest discovery on the Pacific Coast to date.

Today, there is almost no visible evidence that La Paz even existed. Before the damming of the Colorado River at Parker during the Great Depression, the river was known to flood and change course regularly. The river changed its course about two miles to the west in 1870 and this left the town without steamboat traffic for its economic survival. Steamboat traffic needed a landing, so most merchants simply moved six miles to the south to the new and prosperous town of Ehrenberg. Ehrenberg prospered, while La Paz slowly died, for without a landing connected to the Colorado River, people and merchants had no reason for the town. Additionally, mining activity in the La Paz area had been falling off, and economic interest moved south to the Palo Verde Valley, which would one day become an agricultural wonderland in the desert. What the first flood did not finish in 1870, another flood in 1911, completely destroyed the ruins of La Paz. Consequently, La Paz came about because of and died as a result of the wishes of the Colorado River.

An interesting historical event took place on March 5, 1867, which involved a massacre of American citizens at the hands of Apache Indians about eight miles away on the road to La Paz. Forty Apache Indians fired on a group of travelers, killing three, and injuring two with the rest escaping harm. After the travelers fled, the Apache Indians destroyed a wagon by rifling it, and ran off the stock, which consisted of eighteen mules and four horses.

By the following year, yet another significant event occurred; a combined hostile force of Apache-Yumas, Apache-Mohaves, and Yavapais Indians were threatening La Paz and the surrounding territory. The citizens of La Paz and about seventy to eighty Chimehuevi Indians defended the city from these hostiles, who had been killing Anglo settlers, miners, and travelers. The Chimehuevi Indians were very instrumental in scouting these hostiles, who were threatening their Anglo friends. It is believed that without the help of the Chimehuevi Indians, an attack would have occurred. Sadly, between 1867 and 1868 Apache Indians in the area killed an estimated forty-eight men. These and other events would perpetuate the arrival of troops to La Paz, where a military post was built.

On November 15, 1871 it was reported in the *Galveston Daily News* that a stage, which routinely traveled the La Paz route, was attacked by a band of Apaches-Mohave Indians about ten miles from La Paz. The stage driver and two passengers were killed, while two others were wounded, including a female passenger. The mail and passenger luggage was plundered; and to make matters even more interesting, the report claimed highwayman and not Indians perpetuated the attack.

According to the *Arizona Republican* from March 5 1900, Mexicans in La Paz in 1862 first discovered gold; however, it is commonly believed today that Pauline Weaver founded La Paz. Interestingly, the *Arizona Republican* reported the population grew to be between 7,000 and 8,000; this stands in contrast to the commonly assumed population of 5,000 to 6,000. The newspaper also reported county buildings were erected, perhaps in advance of the assumed belief that La Paz would be the county seat. Although, as it turned out the county seat was never approved for La Paz. The town had storehouses, large and small, making it easy for minors to purchase goods. Gold was removed by the crudest of Indian means, with many minors using wooden bowls rather than gold pans, when dry panning. This era of mining continued until about 1868, when the shallow grounds were worked out. By 1870 about half the town moved to Ehrenberg, which was located about seven miles to the south; from that point onward La Paz slowly died, giving way to its southern neighbor.

Moreover, according to the *Arizona Republican*, La Paz still had adobe buildings in 1900, and sand heaps of the labor and efforts of “White Men.” The article went onto say that Peter Laird decided to dry wash the main street in front of stores where gold sweepings were used to purchase goods, whereupon he discovered several coins, gold nuggets, and enough “shot and bullets to supply a Boer regiment.”

Author and naturist J. Smeaton Chase, who wrote *California Desert Trails*, traveled parts of the Mohave Desert on horseback before his book was published in 1919. In his account, he visited Twentynine Palms, Dale, and La Paz, which is located less than an hour’s drive from Blythe Junction. According to Chase, La Paz had become a ghost town by 1891 and by the time he had arrived the last remaining structure was a small circular stone formation.

Furthermore, on May 18 1916, the *Palo Alto Reporter* stated that Pauline Weaver was trapping along the Colorado River, when he went into the nearby mountains looking for gold. Being well liked by the local Indians, he often received gold nuggets for goods with which he traded. He soon discovered what the Indians knew; placer gold was just lying about on the ground around what would become La Paz. To his later dismay, he went to Arizona City and let the secret out; and in a very short time there were hundreds of prospectors conducting placer mining in the area.

It has been estimated that about one million dollars was removed in 1862 alone, with much more in the following years; yet recovery of gold did not drop off until 1868. Gold particles ranged in value from 5 cents to $10, although $20 to $40 nuggets were also common. The largest known piece taken out was valued at $1,160 in 1860s value.

According to an account from August 7, 1939 in the *Yuma Daily Sun*, the remains of Yuma County's first County Capital were nothing but ruins. The first court to be established in Yuma County was in La Paz; but after the flood, the County seat moved to Arizona City in 1872; Arizona City is now called Yuma today.

And according to legend, since the days Coronado sought the seven cities of Cibola, men have tried to find gold in the area north of Yuma (which included No Man's Land California); although, many have only found death and despair, while others struck it rich.

Of interest, Michael Goldwater, patriarch of the Goldwater family, had as much to do with La Paz's rise and fall as did the flood of 1870; or perhaps historians have made a mistake?

According to legend, Goldwater opened his first store in Arizona in 1862; however, the *Daily Review* Newspaper from November 1, 1964 said that Goldwater actually opened his first store in Ehrenberg in 1860, which stands in stark contrast to common beliefs today.

After the flood of 1870, Goldwater, who had gained Army supply contracts, simply switched operations to his Ehrenberg store. Ehrenberg became the main economic hub for the Colorado River, at the behest of Goldwater, which certainly aided Ehrenberg's growth and La Paz's decline.

By 1871, the Goldwater store in Erhenberg became the center of all community activity. It not only offered the many items of a general merchandising establishment, but it also served as the city hall, jail and the territory's first post office. It is an interesting side note to La

Paz that Michael Goldwater, the grandfather of presidential candidate and senator Barry Goldwater, was once one such merchant who lived in La Paz.

In an article written by Francis Johnston in the *Independent Press Telegram* on August 4, 1957, it was said that William Bradshaw was responsible for finding a newer and shorter route from Los Angeles to La Paz, which resulted in a stage line being established after gold was discovered in 1862.

And according to legend, Bradshaw found the route after getting some initial help from Chief Cabezon of the Cahuilla Indians. In addition, upon reaching the Salton Sea village of Toro, Bradshaw received a map from a Maricopa Indian that showed all the watering holes to the Colorado River from the Salton Sea. Upon which, Bradshaw made it to the Colorado River, where he built a ferry to La Paz; this ferry and road would eventually take on his name.

The stage line required water for the horses, which resulted in water stations being established at ranch sites along the Bradshaw trail. Now familiar towns were nothing but waterholes in 1862, including Beaumont, Banning and Whitewater being three of the most visible names; however, there were more, including Dos Palmas, Canyon Spring, and Chuckawalla Well were three of the less common names known today. Stages and freighting supplies to miners in the area was a profitable venture until the railroad came to Yuma in 1876; by then, La Paz was in a steep decline.

There was an interesting tale about Bradshaw, who was known as a binge drinker and sort of an eccentric man that was haunted by ghosts. It was reported in the *Los Angeles News* on December 17, 1864 that Bradshaw had committed suicide by cutting his own throat. Bradshaw “walked deliberately into a carpenter's shop, took up a drawing knife, and with one stroke nearly severed his head from his shoulders.”

Why would Bradshaw, who was financially successful by 1864, cut his own throat?

Bradshaw, who was proficient at using firearms, was said to have used a drawknife instead, which seems to be a contradiction. A drawknife would be much more effective for an assassin than a person wanting to commit suicide. As such, James Grant, who was a known rival, gave the only known report of Bradshaw's death. The answer might lay with Grant, who believed he was the first discoverer of the trail to La Paz, not Bradshaw.

To cloud the issue even further, it seemed the probate of his estate claimed his death occurred in Bradshaw Ferry on May of 1865, not La Paz in 1864. Additionally, all original probate papers are missing and county files have no written account of the disposition of his estate that was recorded in the probate record book. With little motive for committing suicide, along with the weapon used, the death of William Bradshaw will remain a clouded mystery for perhaps a long time.

Interestingly, Herman Christian Ehrenberg, a local pioneer, wrote about the declining condition of La Paz in 1870, "La Paz, at this time presents a very dilapidated appearance, and to one who saw it, some years ago…it cannot but produce feelings of sadness for it is now quite apparent that it must soon pass into ruins and become one of the things of the past."

According to *The Sun* newspaper article from June 24, 1974, La Paz now exists on Indian reservation land; and with a $5,000 grant from the National Park Service the land around the ruins was cleared in order to map the town with infrared aerial mapping. The mapping efforts hoped to establish an outline of the community for future reconstruction of La Paz. They had hoped to build a display town similar to La Paz before it died, but to date, this project has never come to fruition.

The Sun article also confirmed other accounts that the La Paz strike was discovered by Pauline Weaver in 1862 and that the town acted as the Yuma County seat from 1862 to 1871, when it was moved to Arizona City. Interestingly, in 1864, La Paz failed to become the permanent county seat by one vote, but it still served as the temporary county seat until 1871; after the county seat moved to Arizona City in 1872, La Paz declined rapidly.

And lastly, by October 19, 1857, the Beale Camel experiment and expedition had reached and crossed the Colorado River just north of La Paz. Out of this experiment came a unique character name Hi Jolly, who was one of the Syrian camel drivers who accompanied the expedition. When the Army abandoned the experiment, Hi Jolly stayed in the area and worked as a freight hauler, a prospector and as a scout; he died in 1902 and is buried east of La Paz at Quartsite.

The Colorado River ran wild until the building of Hoover Dame in 1935.

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Chapter 4

Camels to California

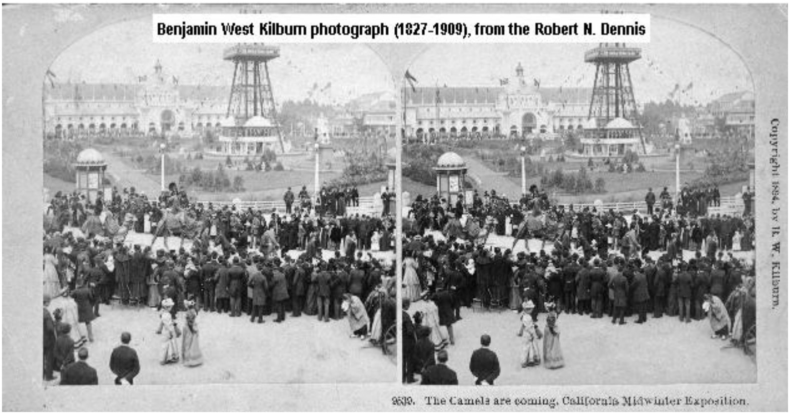
U.S. Brigadier General Edward Beale was born February 4, 1822 and died April 22, 1893, and is conceivably best known for carrying out former Secretary of War Jefferson Davis' army camel experiment.

To perhaps the astonishment of many, there was a time when camels roamed the California desert. This forgotten tail has been included in the story of No Man's Land California for one simple reason, like much of the area, the army camel experiment is not commonly known today. The idea that camels were even needed seems a far-fetched concept. Automobilist today can easily drive a few hours to get across the same area, days or perhaps weeks would often take. It is common knowledge that pioneers, and prospectors easily died for a lack of water and their unpreparedness; few were ever given a second chance. Even today, the desert area under discussion is unforgiving to those who are not prepared to travel it. Thus, the army's camel experiment was concocted out of a perceived need; as such, there was a great deal at stake if the camels succeeded.

The inspiration for a camel experiment was not a new idea in the 1850s. Going back to 1836, Major George Crosman broached the idea to authorities in Washington. There is also an account that Gwin Heap, who became a proselytizing convert to the camel idea, was the first man to mention the suggestion to a skeptical Edward Beale, well before he took charge.

The Mexican American war that ended in 1848 stretched the army's abilities to handle the newly acquired territory; and because of a perceived need, the camel suggestion was once again proposed in 1848 by Major Henry Wayne, who quickly recommended it to

Mississippi State Senator Jefferson Davis, who became an ardent supporter of the concept. Davis became Secretary of War in 1853, where he quickly enacted his plans for a camel experiment. In a report written to President Franklin Pierce, dated December 1, 1853, Davis stated there were important military applications that could be applied to camels in the southwest. His initial report did nothing to move the President or Congress, so in 1854 Davis again renewed his appeal. Unfortunately, this did not work, so Davis turned to deception. When the annual army appropriation bill was submitted in 1855, there was no reference to the camels Davis had asked for earlier; but at the last moment, an amendment was attached to the appropriation bill, which awarded $30,000 for his ambition. As a result of Davis' efforts, camels and dromedaries were purchased for experimental military purposes, which were under the direction of the War Department, in the newly acquired southwest areas.


Benjamin West Kilburn photograph (1827-1909), from the Robert N. Dennis

Copyright 1894, by B. W. Kilburn.
9539. The Camels are coming, California Midwinter Exposition.

About the same time, Edward Beale was quickly gaining notoriety as the go to man in the southwest. Beale had become Superintendent of Indian Affairs in California and Nevada in 1853; and after hearing of Davis' funding success, he urged Lieutenant David Porter of the United States Navy, who happened to be a relative, to intervene on his behalf. Beale, with the help of some very influential people, was able to attach himself to the experiment as a surveyor; but his direct participation would have to wait until 1857.

The governmental experiment quickly learned several important things about camels they did not know prior to going overseas to select the animals. While visiting the Grand Duke of Tuscany's estate, it was reported that 250 camels could do the work of 1,000 horses. Moreover, the camels at the estate were not being taken care of and were forced to work from sun up to sun down; in spite of this, the report stated the animals were incredibly strong and durable. Also learned, the camel quickly adapted to colder climates, which would be of value if the animals were needed in other areas, north of the southwest desert.

In their travels, United States government representatives learned other facts as well. After visiting Tunis, Constantinople, and Malta, it was discovered there were different types of camels. The word camel was often used generically; there are actually two species. The Bactrian has two humps, which is a non-riding species, and the Arabian is a one hump species; the term dromedary was a saddle or riding variety of the Arabian camel. It was quickly concluded that the United States Army needed the Arabian camel, but also purchased several Bactrian's and hybrids as well. Camels were known to carry 600 pounds, travel over 70 miles in twelve hours and could be used for military purposes.

One account mentioned a unique tactic used in the Mediterranean–North Africa area. Five hundred dromedaries carried one thousand men; two men sat back to back atop the camel, each carried a rifle and a saber. When the battle started, men dismounted and camels knelt, thereby creating a natural shield for the men; they could also quickly stand and be mounted if need be. Stories like this quickly gained favor with many American military tacticians, who thought such thinking might be helpful in the American southwest.

A decision was made not to purchase any camels from populated centers, as it was quickly realized that those from cities were usually diseased or crippled. As United States representatives went to Cairo to purchase additional camels, it was determined Egyptian governmental approval would be needed before any of them could leave the country. Due to pressure from the Pasha, who intervened, the United States was initially permitted to take only two camels out of the country; however, after further discussions, six camels were finally agreed upon. In time, the United States was able to acquire enough camels from other areas before returning; although, as it turned out, the experience was much more difficult than originally thought.

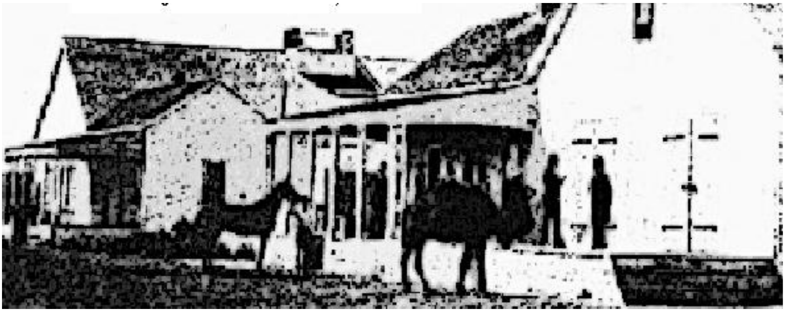
The ship selected for the voyage was appropriately called the Supply, which was an old store-ship that had been modified to transport camels across the Atlantic. The deck underneath the main top deck had been made into a stable, which had airshafts installed. There was a major effort to keep the decks below cool, which were normally much warmer, thereby keeping the camels comfortable. The crew also built a special device for hoisting camels on and off the ship, which was called the camel car. A flat bottom boat was also utilized to get the camels from shore to ship that could be easily warehoused aboard the Supply. To control the animals, three Egyptian handlers and sailors were hired immediately. As it turned out, the handlers were worthless at sea, forcing others to do their duties. Most of the hired laborers were Greek urbanites from the Constantinople streets; very few had any experience with camels, and were only looking for passage to the United States, where they had heard the streets were paved with gold.

On February 15, 1856, the Supply left for the United States with thirty-three camels. Every precaution was taken to care for these animals, especially animal sanitation; as a result, there was scarcely a bad odor within the ship. The camels were brushed, washed, and fed regularly; every effort was taken to care for them. The system for feeding was well thought out, which commenced at three o'clock each day with each animal receiving a gallon of oats, or an oat pea mix; the stalls were always filled with hay – each animal averaged about 10 pounds of hay a day and about three gallons of water. Currying the camels started at nine o'clock each morning; wooden combs were used to brush their long hair, and hard brushes were used on their joints and feet.

Just before reaching Texas, the Supply stopped in Kingston, Jamaica on April 13, 1856 for supplies. This stop became a big event on the island, with over four thousand people going on the ship to see the camels bound for the United States. These camels intrigued Jamaicans, as all the camels on the island had died off due to hoof-and-mouth disease working the mines years earlier.

It took a total of three months to reach Texas; along the way the camels remained obedient. Even during some of the season's worst storms the camels were incredibly adaptable. During one lengthy storm, they simply sat down and did not rise until the storm subsided. Unlike the horse, which was known to kick and bump, the camel was extremely submissive in a storm. Of the original 33 camels, one died during calving, six were born along the voyage – of which four died, all total 34 camels made it to Texas.

On April 29, the crew of the Supply was unsuccessful when they tried to unload their valuable cargo. There was an unusual swell at sea, which kept the ship eight miles from port, but by May 1, a small boat called the Fashion came out to help transfer the camels to shore; however, this effort was unsuccessful as well. Several crewmembers went back to port to secure another boat and to look into other unloading possibilities. On May 2, a third attempt to transfer the camels from the Supply was also unsuccessful. With few alternatives available to the crew, a decision was made to turn toward Balize, an area near the Mississippi River opening, where calmer waters allowed the camels to be safely moved to the Fashion on May 10.



Sketch of an army camel at Government Depot near San Pedro, California, circa 1860

The camels were transported to Powder Horn, Texas, which landed May 14; and once they were taken off the Fashion, the camels quickly became uncontrollably excited. They reared, kicked, even cried out, they broke their halters and tore up pickets, all in an effort to show their enjoyment of being on land. The camels were than moved to Indianola (now Port Lavaca) where the assistant quartermaster erected a temporary stable for them.

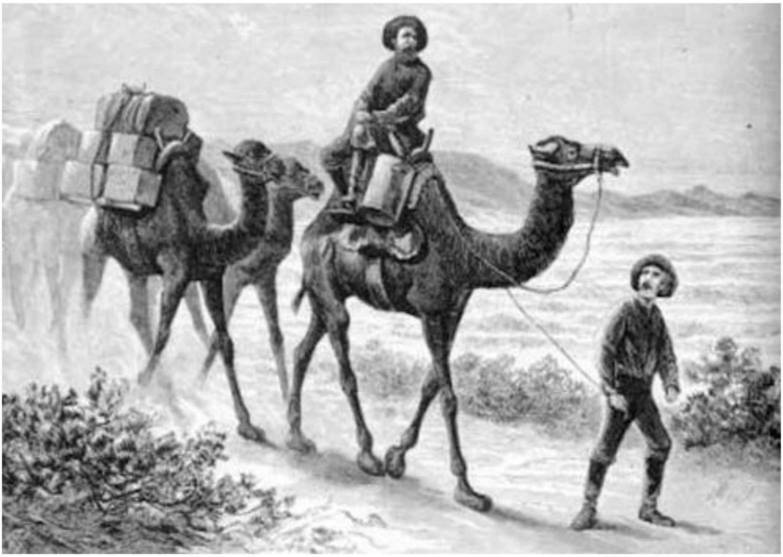
At the end of May, Jefferson Davis sent a message to the captain of the Supply to go back to the Mediterranean for more camels. By November, the Supply was back in Smyrna; this time all the camels had been purchased and were ready for transport. Forty-four camels were loaded and left for the mouth of the Mississippi on November 14; but before departing, a message was sent to Jefferson Davis, stating the Supply should reach its destination by late January 1857. The ship arrived at the opening of the Mississippi River on January 30, with forty-one camels, having lost three along the voyage. The camels were transferred at sea to the steamer

Suwanee and were than shipped to Indianola, where it landed on February 10, 1857.

While the second load of camels were being bought, shipped and processed, the first load of camels were slowly acclimating to their new terrain. The first camel shipment remained in Indianola until June 4, 1856 before they traveled to San Antonio Texas. Due to a bad road, the camels remained frisky and unruly; but by June 11, they showed signs of adjusting to their new environment. The camels arrived in San Antonio on June 18, and were driven another twelve miles outside of town to their temporary quarters. Jefferson Davis sent a message to the handlers, admonishing them for not giving them time to adjust. He mentioned that if horses had gone through this voyage much more time would have been given. Davis wrote, “Horses under the same circumstances, would require many months to regain their full efficiency, and animals of a larger size would require a still longer period of rest.”

A new home was soon sought, and after some searching of the area, Camp Val Verde, Texas was agreed upon. Not wanting to waste anymore time, and in spite of Davis’s earlier admonishment, experiments immediately began. The camels were tested with different weight loads and travel distances were timed. One of the first experiments was to travel a straight road lying over a mountain, which was too difficult for wagons. Twelve camels left October 1, and in spite of a twenty-one mile detour the caravan arrived in less than two days. Unexpectantly, it rained heavily and the road became muddy; even the level lands would have been impassable for a horse and wagon. The camels were carrying a rather light load of only three hundred and fifty pounds; yet, despite the rain and difficult terrain they handled the problem with little difficulty. To the surprise of many, the camels did incredibly well, much better than horses or mules would have done.

As 1857 approached, the election of President James Buchanan began to worry supporters of the camel experiment. Jefferson Davis, in particular, knew he would be out of favor and the support of his prized project could be prematurely terminated. As such, if the project was to have any future backing, it was decided that it should be turned over to direct military control. Another issue of importance was public perception of the camel, which was regarded as ugly, filthy, and would never replace the beloved horse. In order to counter negative public discourse, a demonstration was conducted in Texas. Rarely were the camels ever exposed to more than 600 pounds; however, for the purpose of this demonstration 1,256 pounds was placed upon the back of a camel. To the surprise of many spectators, the camel was able to stand after being loaded. Unfortunately, this did little to help the camels' future, especially among teamsters and mule drivers who did everything possible to discredit the camel.



1877 Harper's Weekly sketch
about a pack train of camels in the southwest

In March of 1857, the Buchanan administration came to office and so ended Jefferson Davis' direct involvement in the camel project. In fact, new Secretary of War John Floyd transferred many of those responsible for the camels to other posts; however, this change in leadership did not dampen the camels' immediate future. Secretary Floyd quickly commissioned Lieutenant Edward Beale to use the camels in a survey he wanted conducted from Fort Defiance New Mexico to California. Twenty-five camels from the heard stationed in Camp Verde, Texas were used in Beale's travels through No Man's Land California.

Beale had already been appointed Indian Commissioner to Arizona and California in 1853 and was well respected in Washington. In his travels throughout these two states, he had already familiarized himself with the outlining territories, especially the Old Spanish routes north and south of No Man's Land; between Yuma Arizona and Barstow California. Thus, it came as no surprise to many when he was asked to survey a new path to California, and to test the usefulness of the camel. Beale followed the 35th parallel as much as possible and was able to shave 300 miles off the older more established Old Spanish Trail. To the interest of many readers, this wagon road would eventually become the route for the Santa Fe Railroad and Old Route 66, which went through Amboy.

By age 28, Beale had at least a dozen prior experiences in California that would become vital to his success; he had traveled the Old Spanish Trail and the Mohave Desert long before the formation of the experiment. In 1853, Beale and his men experienced the following with mules, which would eventually help the camel cause,

> The heat increased as we advanced into the desert, and most of the party had divested themselves of the greater part of their clothing. The guns, which we carried across the pummels of our saddles, were hot to the touch; and to add to our annoyance and suffering the wind laden with an impalpable sand, blew fiercely from the southward, feeling as if issued from the mouth of a furnace, and obliterating in many places all traces of a road. The mules, already jaded by traveling across the sandy plain, went slowly along, their heads dropping to the ground.

Experiences like this perhaps gave Beale the final motivation to use camels in the southwest. Starting in 1854, Beale bombarded the War Department with tails of camels from Asia and Africa, which helped him to eventually attain the camels' usage.

To the amazement of many, including Beale, the camels proved their worth. Starting at Fort Defiance in New Mexico, Beale and his newly formed army camel caravan surveyed a route to California. He would eventually take a southern route, crossing the Colorado River and through the Mohave Desert. To Beale's astonishment, he found the camels easily traversed the mighty Colorado River. Readers should be reminded that the Colorado River was considered an uncontrollable tributary during this period; not until dams were made in the 20th century were there any efforts to truly control its flow. Beale and his army camels eventually reached Fort Tejon in late 1859, which became their new home for about five and a half months. Beale continued to use his camel's to explore other areas as well. He discovered the animals were like “ships of the desert.” The camel required little water for long periods, which was advantageous for his explorations. Beale could go into unchartered areas for days at a time, only carrying the water he and his men would need. This was especially important when going into No Man’s Land, as well as Death Valley, for there was little knowledge of where water might be.

Interestingly, as much enthusiasm as Beale had for camels, they were countered by Kit Carson’s skepticism; but it was Jefferson Davis who made the difference in the end. Along with Kit Carson, both men became known as the pathfinders; they both discovered areas no white man had ever seen before. Beale and Carson have since become famous for their discoveries in Death Valley, but little is mentioned of their exploits in No Man’s Land. Moreover, these men were also known to have surveyed the Coachella Valley, which lies southwest of No Man’s Land, but again little is mentioned of his travels in between.

Their eventual path south of Death Valley, through Amboy, led settlers and eventually the railroad to develop the area. Both men were legendary for exploring alternative routes, so it is entirely possible they also traveled near the area now known as the center of No Man’s Land, Rice California. A few miles west of Rice is the cut off road to Cadiz; these two destinations are about 45 miles apart; and because of this close proximity, it is hypothesized Beale and Carson explored the area near Rice California, although there appears to be no written record of it. However, as a minimum, the Beale expedition did enter the northern tip of No Man’s Land, and traveled through what would one day become Cadiz and Amboy.

The boundary of No Man’s Land is not precise, as it has been vaguely assembled based on a 1914 newspaper account on Blythe Junction; and has been expanded to include the surrounding area. For the purpose of this definition, No Man’s Land covers the area between Bagdad, Essex, Midland, Old Dale, California, and La Paz, Arizona. Some might ask, why La Paz Arizona? La Paz was added in spite of its ruins being two miles east of the current state border. It was once used as a port for crossing between Arizona and

California; however, after a flood in 1870 the river shifted west about two miles, close to the current state line. We must be reminded that state and national borders are a rather modern term; in truth, for centuries, people crossed natural barriers rather than clearly defined lines. Borders were often based on natural boundaries, like mountains, rivers and oceans; and when these did not exist, they were often developed on or near Parallel and Meridian lines. Thus, adding La Paz to this area does not seem out of context, especially since the primary basis of this discussion is town's that no longer exist in an area that the modern world has forgotten.

Before the camel experiment was eventually terminated, there were a couple of other efforts. Captain Winfield Hancock, Assistant Quartermaster in Los Angeles, tried using camels for a planned messenger service between Los Angeles and Fort Mohave in September 1860. The experiment featured Hi Jolly, the beloved Greek camel driver, who rode a camel that died of exhaustion near Fishponds (close to Daggett), while the other one died at Sugar Loaf (near Barstow). This trial proved that camels were no faster than a two mule buckboard service, but were much more expensive. Camels were great for carrying heavy supplies, but were no good as an express animal. Sylvester Mowry, a former army officer, conducted another test in early 1861. This poorly planned surveying operation set out from Fort Mohave with three camels. The expedition got lost in the barren desert; and after the mules died, it was the camels that brought the men out alive. This second expedition proved the camels were indeed important within the terrain of the deserts.

Beale, unlike other army officials, considered the army camel experiment a success and requests went out for a thousand additional camels. However, Congress had bigger problems to deal with. The Civil War took priority, so the California project was suspended in 1861 and disbanded in 1863, and Fort Tejon was deactivated in 1864; however, there appears to be a few camels held and used in Texas until after the war.

The end of the army camel experiment is a sad one; eventually the camels were either sold or let go. In California in 1864 and in Texas in 1866, the Federal Government auctioned the remaining camels in custody. There are, however, several footnotes that should be mentioned about this incredible beast. Camels were used throughout the southwest in salt pack trains, and Confederate forces captured fourteen of them from Union forces during the Civil War. Moreover, in Texas, camels were used to carry cotton bales near Brownsville, and tales in Arizona, and Texas of camels wondering into encampments continued well into the early 20th century.

A California auction was conducted on February 26, 1864; and to the dismay of the Benicia Depot's quartermaster, the highest bidder at this auction was Samuel McLeneghan, who purchased the herd of 37 camels for only $1,945, a mere $52.56 each. It seemed that McLeneghan was the only bidder, and the auctioneer had trouble getting any response from the meager crowd that showed up.

By mid 1865 McLeneghan sold two camels to the Portland Oregon Zoo. The two camels were put aboard the ocean steamer Brother Jonathan, and after the ship collided with a submerged rock, it went down off Crescent City California. Only a few passengers survived and the remains of the camels washed ashore a few days later.

By the time private interests got involved in the idea of using camels there appeared to have been an immediate backlash. Two private importations were also attempted following the government’s initial efforts, which failed miserably.

On October 16, 1858, Mrs. M.J. Watson visited the port authority in Galveston, Texas and reported she had eighty-eight camels aboard her ship. The port authority refused to admit her shipment on the grounds she was using the camel stench to mask the smell of slaves. After two months in port, Mrs. Watson was said to have dumped her camels along the shoreline and quickly left for Cuba; where slavery was legal until 1886.

As a result, camels wandered about the Galveston area until they died of neglect or were slaughtered around the coastal sand dunes. Another dozen camels also had the same fate in 1859 when they were let ashore at Port Lavaca.

The failure of the army camel experiment came down to perhaps one thing, a lack of support from the American people. These alien beasts smelled badly, frightened horses, and were never truly accepted by the army, or the handlers who were familiar with the more submissive horse and mule. Camels did well when they were in a herd; however, they often became uncontrollable when taken away from the group.

Beale, however, forewarned the War Department about this potential problem well before the camel experiment ended. In July of 1857 Beale wrote,

> If the Department intends carrying their importation of the camels further, after this present experiment has been more fully tested, and I have reported my success or the want of it, I would strongly recommend a new saddle to be prepared for them, to replace the present clumsy contrivance, and also that a corps of Mexicans be employed in herding and using them. The Americans of the class who seek such employment are totally unfit for it, being for the most part harsh, cruel and impatient with animals entrusted to their care.

A few footnotes to the end of the camel experiment:

According to the Fort Tejon Historical Association, there was never an Army Camel Corps, as many authors have previously stated. The story of the camel experiment has become legendary; however their attachment to Fort Tejon is a myth. The camels were only housed at the fort for five and a half months before being transported to the Los Angeles Quartermaster Depot, previous to being auctioned off in Benicia.

Beale retired shortly after the Civil War to the area known today as Fort Tejon at the Tejon Pass; he purchased 270,000 acres for 5 cents an acre from Mexicans who thought he paid too much.

Beale was known to have traveled the Colorado River, crossing it near Needles. He also surveyed the area south of Death Valley and the Coachella Valley.

Philip Tedro, also known as Hi Jolly, was a popular Greek camel handler who died in 1902 near the Colorado River, and is buried in Quartzsite, Arizona.

The Camel – Topsy, died in 1934 at the Garfield Zoo in Los Angeles, and was the last known descendant of the camel experiment.

Route 66 and the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway went through Amboy, which was the passageway established by Beale. Amboy is now a ghost town, like much of No Man’s Land California.

Chapter 5

Sheephole Mountains Lost Mine

As has already been mentioned within this book, mining was one of the earliest reasons for going to the harsh area known today as No Man's Land California. As such, there are a few interesting stories about men who ventured into the area and found gold, but never really revealed their claims, for obvious reasons.

The area is inundated with vertical and horizontal mine shafts

At least three lost mine stories have been accredited to the area known today as the Sheephole Mountains – the lost shotgun mine, the legend of the gold shootout, and the lost Spanish mine. There are some eerie similarities between these three accounts.

The Shotgun Mine was first discovered in 1873 by a miner named Long, who died shortly after discovering his gold. As the story goes, Long had a bolder fall on his leg, which crushed it and disabled him.

Being all alone, he was forced to abandon his claim and worked his way back to San Bernardino, where he died shortly thereafter; but, before his death, he wrote an extensive letter to his partner about the whereabouts of his discovery, which laid 15 miles north of Dale Dry Lake. The letter was discovered sometime around 1952, a short time after his partner had died, which led to a great deal of speculation. In Long's letter he described the mine as being in a brushed-filled canyon with a small natural spring further up the canyon. He hid his shotgun under a ledge at the entrance to the mine, which is where the name of the mine comes from.

Up the side of the mountain is an old mine shaft
that has since become a spring fed well

George Pfleger was said to have rediscovered the mine in 1970, and gave a detail description of his account in *Desert Magazine*, January 1971 edition, whereupon finding the mine he said,

> If this was the lost mine there should be a spring just up the canyon and around the bend and, just as described, there it was, but it was covered with at least three feet of sand and required much digging to reach water. The broken Indian pottery scattered over the old trails leading in from several directions indicate it was well known to the early inhabitants

of the area that water existed here. This was indeed the lost mine we had hunted for in the past! …

We used the old campfire stones that hadn't been used for almost 100 years and burned wood from his old supply still growing in the canyon in dense profusion… We found a metate used by the Indians to grind corn or whatever it was they ground, a whiskey bottle, purple with sun and age just lying on top of the ground and tin cans the likes of which have not been seen by many except in private collections…

An old file used to trim his burro's feet for a new set of shoes was discovered jutting from a dirt bank along with an unexplainable piece of iron that might have been used as a rock chisel. The most exciting find was just above the spring. A large, flat-faced rock with the words 'CANTEEN TANK' scratched in it, possibly by Long himself.

Two more claim monuments were found indicating about five acres had been staked on the canyon and the wash just below it, justifying my belief that this was where Long had obtained his gold. The only evidence of mining to be found after 93 years are mounds of small rocks, the by-product of a drywasher, a machine that separates gold and other heavy minerals from dry sand.

A vertical mine shaft on the side of the mountain

A closer look down the vertical mine shaft on the side of the mountain

Another visible mine shaft

Pfleger gives much of the credit to finding the lost shotgun mine to what he believed was an Indian trail leading to the area of the spring, which led Long into the mountain initially; and eventually led to Pfleger's rediscovery.

As well, in 1965 the *California Mining Journal* ran an account of four men shooting it out over a gold discovery in the Sheephole Mountains. Each miner wanted the gold for himself, which subsequently ended in a deadly shootout and the death of three of the men in 1900. The only survivor buried the other three men near the mine and left to tell his story to authorities.

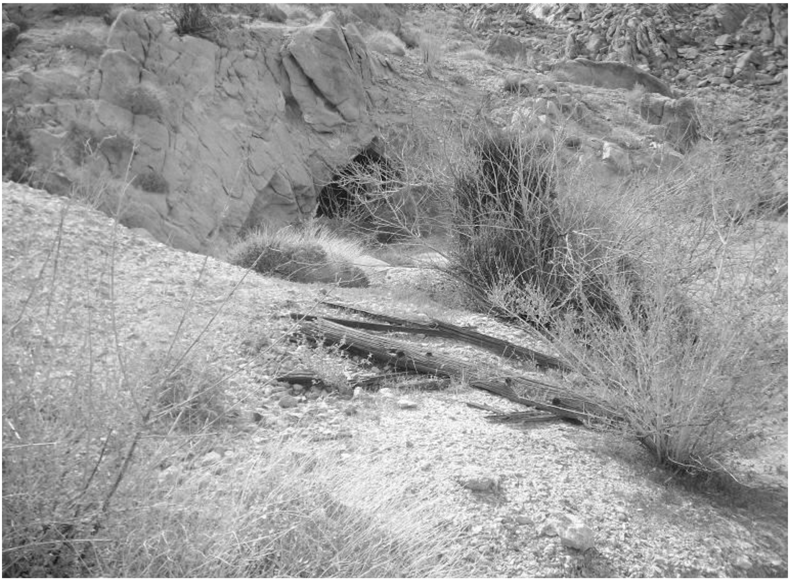
There was another account in 1914 that two miners from Banning, California had made a discovery in the area, which was near the graves of three people.

But between the 1900 account and the 1914 account was the 1908 story of a fellow name Hermit John, who wondered into Amboy with several sacks of ore, which he wanted shipped to San Francisco for refining and smelting. He subsequently walked into the Santa Fee Train Station with his six sacks of ore, where the stationmaster observed Hermit John open the one torn sack to replace its contents. Everyone in the stationhouse gasped when they saw the quartz of the ore was literally plastered with leaves and wires of gold. No one had ever seen such a thing before.

Hermit John befriended a fellow named John D. Mitchell, who later wrote about many of the areas lost mines. Through their discussion, Mitchell discovered that Hermit John found his ore somewhere in the Sheephole Mountains, which laid between Dale Dry Lake and Cadiz Dry Lake.

What led Hermit John to this discovery was an old Spanish arrastra, which he found while prospecting the area. He soon discovered three grave sites and an abandoned mine shaft, which led him to finding another shaft, which was believed to be an old well and another mine shaft; and according to Hermit John, the workings had long been abandoned. He was also able to judge the workers of the mine by the tools left at the site, which he believed were Spanish.

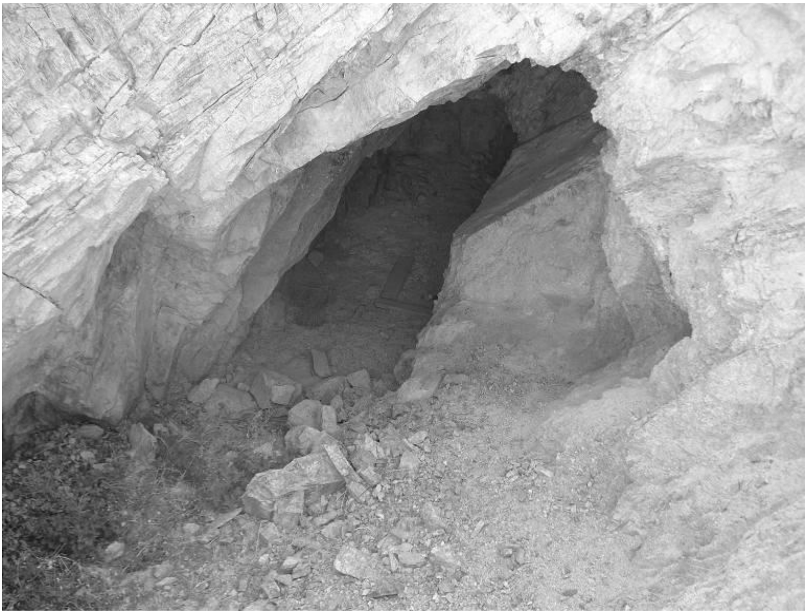
What makes this short story so interesting is the fact that Hermit John left the very next day and no one ever heard about or from him again. Yet, a modern day treasure hunter named Mike McChesney undertook the search for Hermit John's lost mine in December 11, 2007.



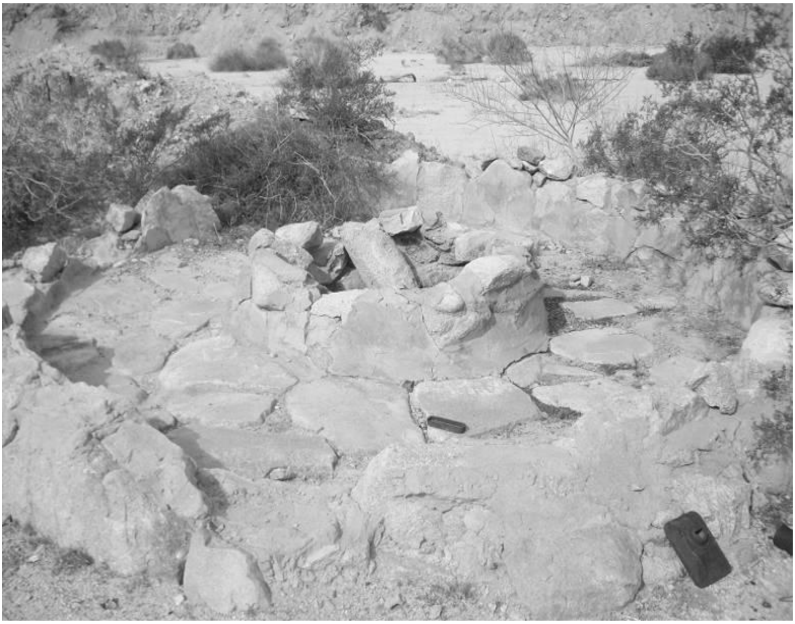
Two mine shafts adjacent to each other

On the edge of the mountainside is a rain water catch

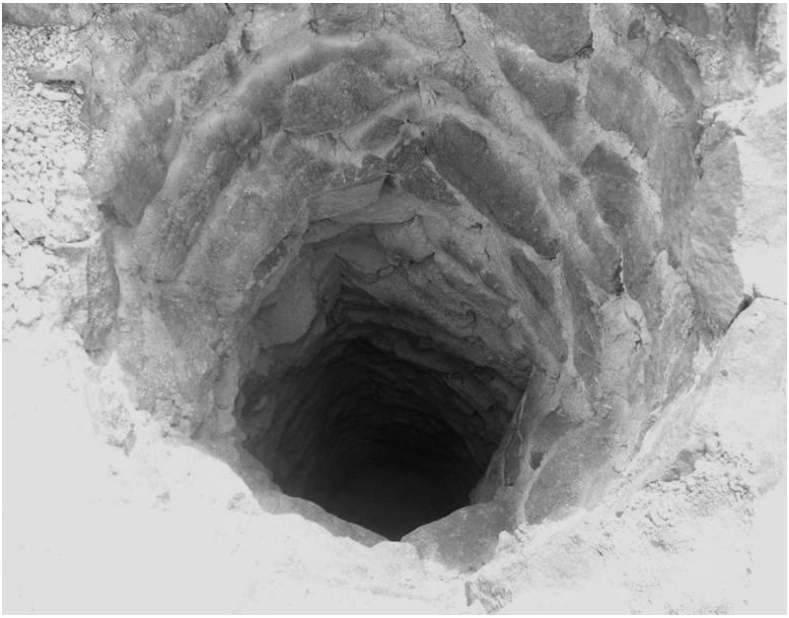
Close up of the rain water catch



Yet another mine shaft



An old Spanish arrastra



An old Spanish well

A 20' x 40' foundation with two rooms within covered in concrete

A foundation for a stamp mill on the side of the mountain

McChesney arrived in the early hours east of Twentynine Palms, along Amboy Road to Sheephole Pass, where he turned off at a Repeater Tower Station and followed the road to the mountain range. He was traveling in a four-wheel drive vehicle, which came in handy, especially over several deep washes. McChesney was originally told to park his vehicle at the Repeater Station and hike in, but he decided to gamble, but recommends to others not to do what he did.

The lower portion of the stamp mill

After several hours of scouring the nearby mountains, McChesney found no signs of Hermit John's mine. Crawling over countless rocks and ravines, he meticulously looked for any sign of a mining operation, only because he was told that it would be very easy to miss it if one did not have a keen eye. He followed several washes and their sides for any sign.

After first spotting an opening in the side of a wash, McChesney again worked his way to the site. Once there he immediately looked for any signs that he had discovered Hermit John's mine, but several things were missing. There were no gravesites, as Hermit John had originally mentioned; but this could be dismissed because the mine was just above a wash, which would have destroyed those sites. As well, McChesney could not find another clue, which was one horizontal shaft and one pit. After an extensive search, he found an old stamping site, but no arrastra, as mentioned by Hermit John.

At a short distance, however, McChesney discovered a small tailing pile, which led him to another small shaft. After looking around he found several mining tools and small pieces of equipment that led him to believe that the area was being worked in the 1940's and perhaps 1950's. In short, his first attempt at finding Hermit John's mine was a failure.

An upward view of the stamp mill

Not one to give up, he went back and talked to the person who led him to the area initially, whereupon he learned that he didn't look hard enough, that the mine was still in the locale. So on January 9, 2008, McChesney took off again for the Sheephole Mountains in search of Hermit John's lost mine.

After another 5 hours of searching, he eventually went higher than he did previously, this time to the top of the 3500-foot ridgeline. He had traveled from ridge to ridge, going up as much as going down. Just when he was about to give up, he discovered what looked like a trail, although time had certainly taken its toll on its condition. After a closer look, McChesney was right; he found a narrow trail, which he soon followed into a very steep valley.

Following the trail, McChesney hiked another two miles where he discovered a huge pile of tailings coming off the side of a mountain. He climbed up the lower pile of tailing only to discover a small patio like area, but still no mine. However, after moving around the corner, and upon a closer look he discovered what he had been looking for. It was not very big, and if one was not looking for a mine, it would be real easy to miss.

A mine shaft on the side of the mountain with about a 100' drop off

With excitement, McChesney ventured into the mine, where he discovered heavy timbers shoring up the wall. After a closer examination, the mine looked like it had been operating around the time Hermit John roamed the Sheephole Mountains; and while searching the pilings, he found silver, galena, tin, and lead, and upon entering the mine again, a closer look discovered veins of gold sulphides still lining the wall of the mine.

Yet, there was more, McChesney hiked further up the mountain where he found another shaft. This tunnel was the double shaft he had been searching for, with one tunnel going horizontally and another going almost vertical – just like Hermit John mentioned back in 1908. It was obvious to McChesney that the vertical shaft had collapsed, which partially filled the mine with rock and wood debris.

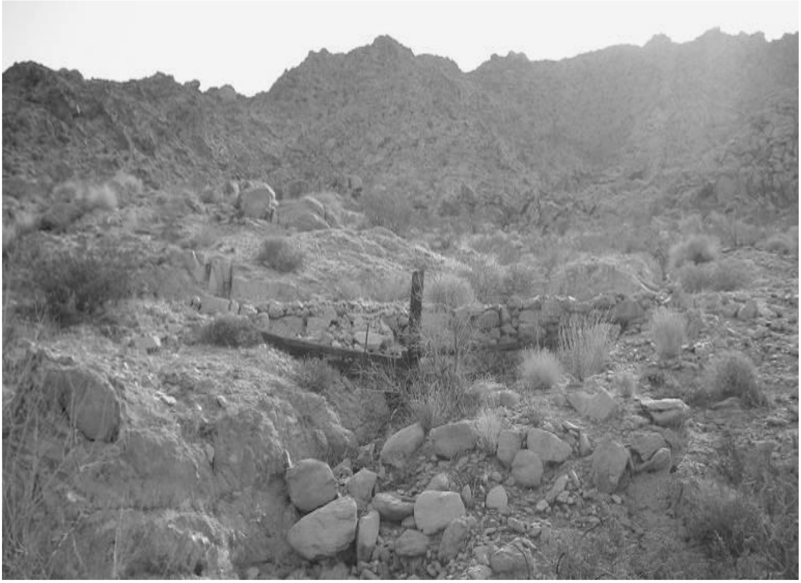
A rock formation on the side of the mountain supporting a road

There was no conclusive proof that McChesney, like Pfleger search of the shotgun mine in 1970, did in fact, rediscover Hermit John’s lost mine, but according to many people who have searched the area also, this might very well be the location so many people have been looking for, for about a hundred years now.

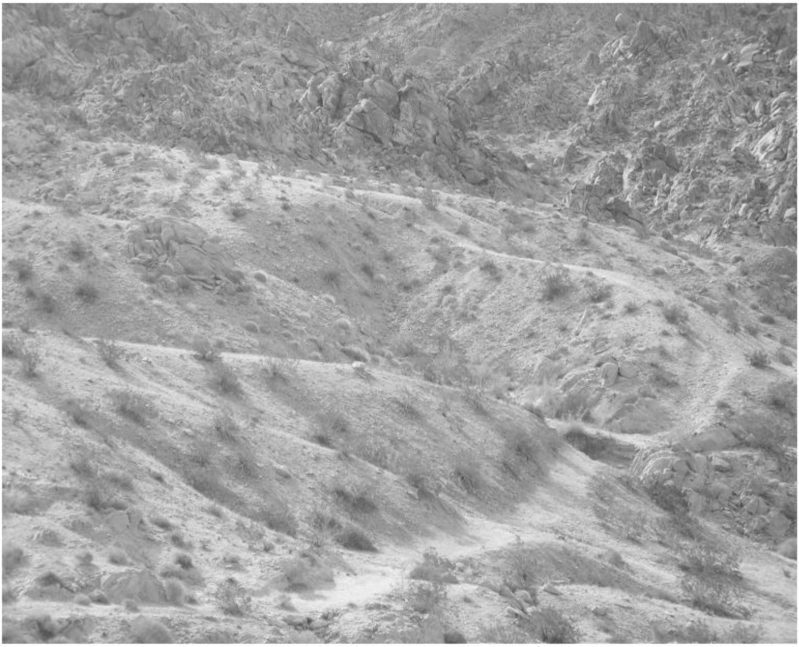
As well, it is certainly obvious that other people did mine the area after Hermit John first walked into Amboy, which leads to so many other unanswerable questions. Like, was it the story of Hermit John that led so many people into the Sheephole Mountains to mine the area, and what ever happened to Hermit John – he was never heard of after the Amboy incident. Did other men follow him back to his mine and did he die because of his discovery? The reader must be reminded that the gold brought into Amboy was nothing like the gold being mined in Dale, which certainly would have gotten people all riled up and could have possibly led to Hermit John’s demise. We will perhaps never truly know if these mine stories are related, although some speculate they are.

A view from the Spanish foundation looking down toward the well, arrastra and mining works

We know that a miner named Long discovered an old Spanish mine in the Sheephole Mountains in 1887, and met his death as a result. We also know that three miners died in the Gold Shootout in 1900 as a result of an incredible gold discovery. We again discovered that Hermit John stumbled upon a mine he said was Spanish and brought his workings down to Amboy in 1908; never to be heard of again. And finally, a report that two men from Banning worked a mine site that had three graves in 1914, gave us our final clue to combine this interesting explanation of the lost mine of Sheephole Mountains. Were these four accounts related to the mines now known as shotgun mine and Hermit John’s mine? Some say they are and some say they are different; we will, perhaps never know for certain.



Another rock formation supporting the same road



Old road going to the vertical and horizontal mine shafts

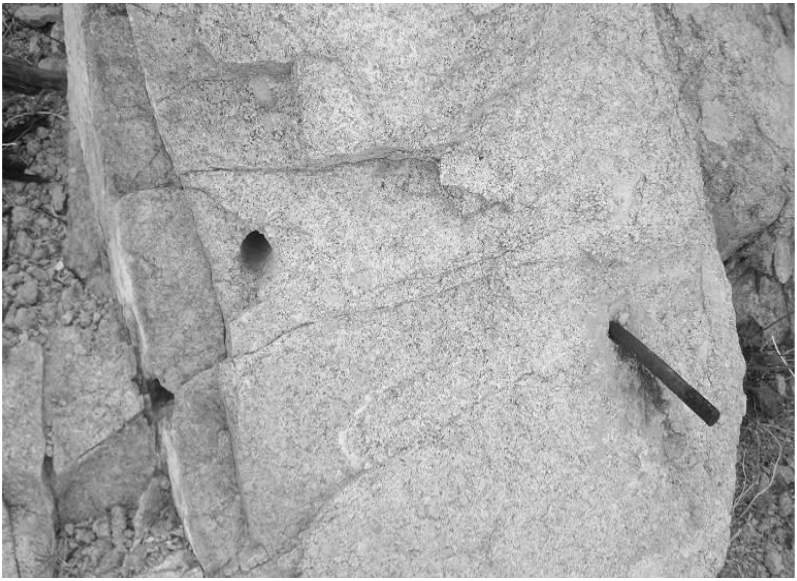
Above view of old Spanish well and arrastra

An old piece of wood and metal laying about the area

Timbers holding back a wall from a collapsed mine shaft

A vertical mine

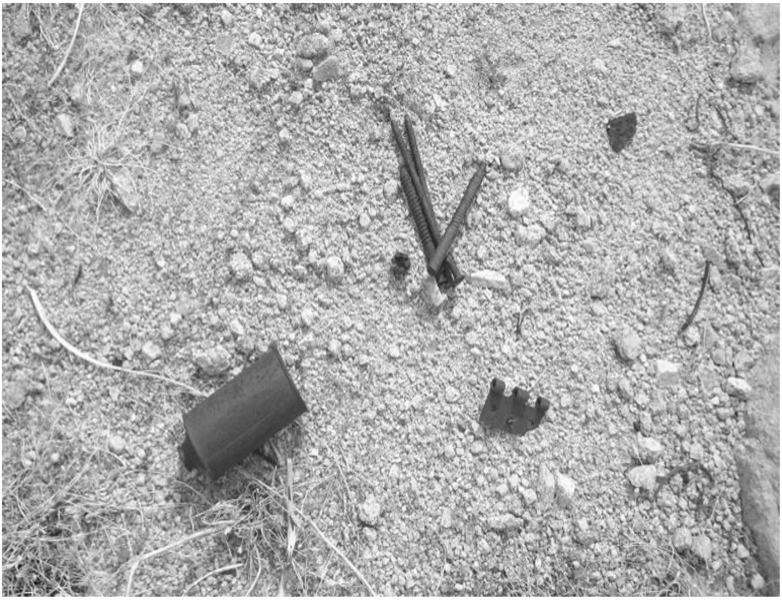
An old piece of timber and assorted wood splinters



A bolt protruding the side of a rock and two drilled holes to the left

A small step later left to help someone descend an old mine

A concrete basin for panning for gold adjacent to the arrastra

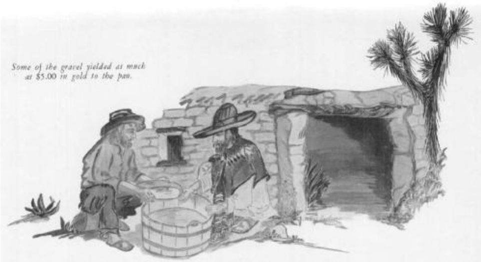


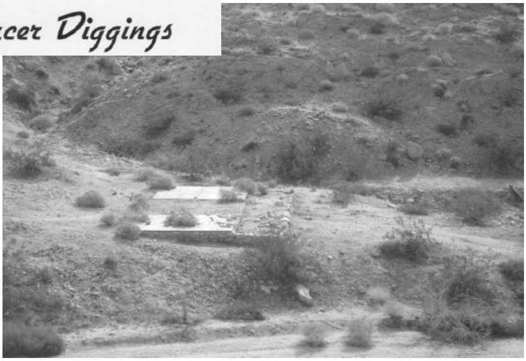
Three screws, a can and a door hinge

An old timber

Footnotes:

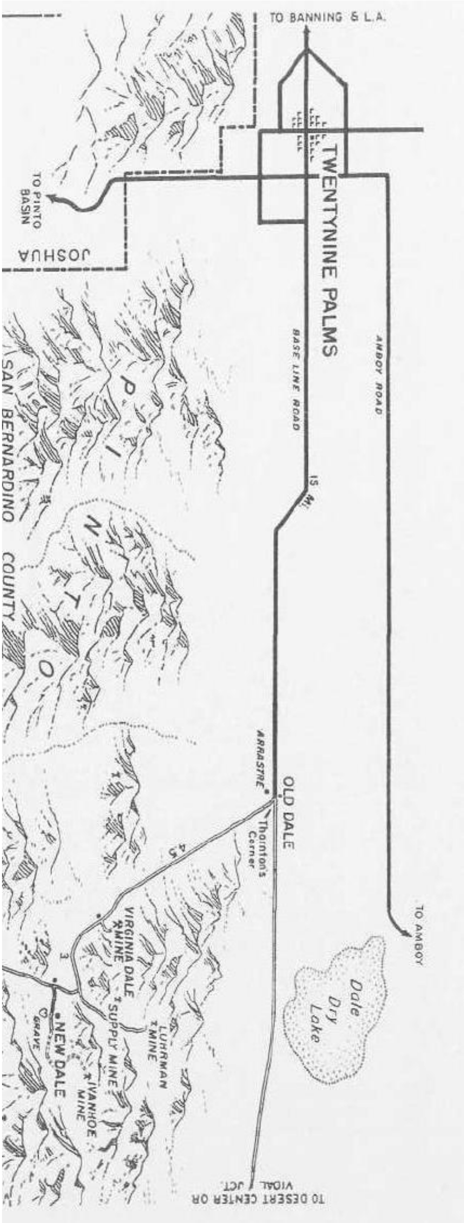
In the February 1941 *Desert Magazine* article entitled Lost Arch Placer Diggings, author John D. Mitchell gave a detailed account about a lost mining area 25 miles north of the Center of No Man's Land California in the Turtle Mountains. The importance of Mitchell's article to the story of the Sheephole Mountains Lost Mine and the 20' x 40' foundation discovered and shown in this story is the exact description given, which said, "while the others found a large pool of water that had collected from the recent rains and made adobes sufficient to construct a two room house. As was their custom the Mexicans built the two rooms separately and extended the roof over the open space between the two rooms." Your author firmly believes that the 1941 *Desert Magazine* description fits well with the sketch and photo of the old Spanish mine site below; what do you think?


Some of the gravel yielded as much as $5.00 in gold to the pan.
Lost Arch Placer Diggings



In addition, in an April 1957 *Desert Magazine* article entitled The Virginia Dales Two Forgotten Towns, authored by Ronald D. Miller, a sketch of Old Dale (Dale I) was displayed (see next page), which showed the location of an old arrastra. Could there have been some type of connection between these two locations, which lay some 15 or so miles apart? Moreover, because of the theory that Spanish miners were working the Sheephole Mountains sometime around

1800 or so, your author believes that it is entirely possible that they ventured south to the same area around what would one day become known as Dale; and if this theory is accurate, local historical accounts must be corrected to tell a more precise account of who actually discovered gold in the Dale region. Therefore, it can safely be assumed that the first European discovers of gold in and around the Dale region were in fact Spanish, or Mexican, as opposed to the current view that it was Anglo Americans. In fact, the more plausible story should be the more accurate tale told throughout the southwest, that when European explorers ventured into these unchartered territories they first encountered native Indians who told them where to find readily available gold sites, like those in the Sheephole Mountains and around Dale, thus giving credit first to the Indians, followed by the Spanish and Mexicans and lastly came the Anglo American


TO BANNING & L.A.
TO PINTO BASIN
JOSHUA
TWENTYNINE PALMS
BASE LINE ROAD
AMBOY ROAD
SAN BERNARDINO COUNTY
PINTO
15 MI.
ARRASTRE
OLD DALE
Thornton's Corner
4.5
VIRGINIA DALE MINE
SUPPLY MINE
LUHRMAN MINE
IVANHOE MINE
NEW DALE
GRAVE
1
TO AMBOY
Dale Dry Lake
TO DESERT CENTER OR VIDAL JCT.

Chapter 6

The Forgotten Towns of Old, Middle and New Dale

By the late 1890s, men with few prospects quietly traveled to the newly developed mining region around Dale, which was making San Bernardino County one of the richest in the state.

About sixty miles west of Rice (Blythe Junction) lays the remains of Dale; sadly, the town no longer exists and only a few concrete objects remain today. The town once stood on both sides of current highway 62, which runs down the middle of the ruins; with many concrete abutments of the mill site remaining. The site is commonly referred to as Old Dale today; however, there were three other primary names discovered, including Virginia Dale, Dale Township and Dale City. During the height of Dale, most economic activity in the region revolved around mining. The two mining districts that influenced areas development were the Dale mining and the Eagle Mountain mining districts.

In 1882, two men known as Tom Lyons and Johnny (Quartz) Wilson left the comfort of the Oasis of Mara in Twentynine Palms and began exploring to the east; however, they never reached the mountain ranges near Blythe Junction; instead, they discovered gold about 20 miles to the east, still some 40 miles short of the center of No Man's Land. As a result of their discovery, the prosperous mining town of Dale developed, where area miners congregated around the town for entertainment and supplies, and by most accounts, it was a friendly place with a population of about 1,000.

Lyons and Wilson first organized the Dale mining district and owned the first 5-stamp mill at a well near Dale Dry Lake, formally known as Burt's Lake. Because of this development, Old Dale was developed in 1883; and initially went by the name Virginia Dale, although, in time it was shortened to Dale. The town was established on the flatlands, and in the beginning thrived because of its close proximity to water, which was needed to mill ore from the Virginia Dale mine about four miles away. In time, however, prospectors continued to venture south, into the Pinto Mountains, which hindered the town's permanence.

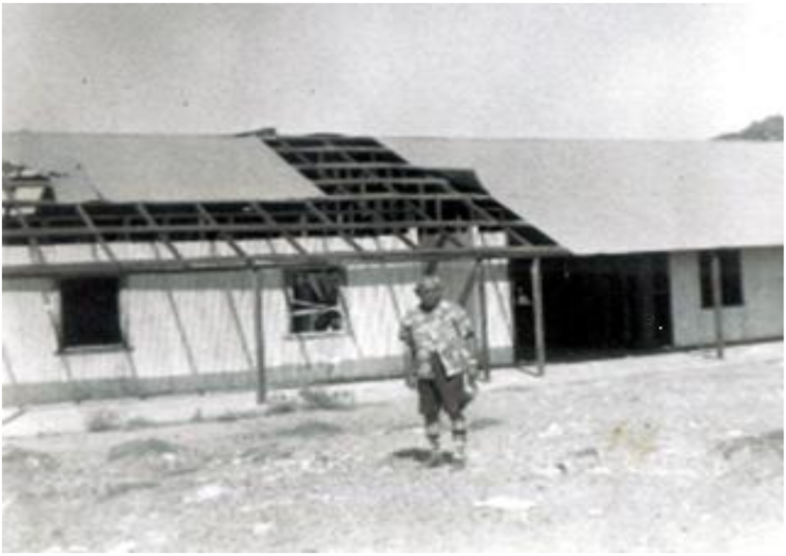
Interestingly, the town of Dale held a meager existence until about 1895, when new strikes south of it were discovered. As a result, hordes of placer and lode miners were drawn to the area in search of gold, which resulted in a variety of tent and adobe structures being quickly erected around the town and the Virginia Dale mine; although, in the beginning most were located near the town. A post office was first established in 1896, followed promptly by the development of a voting precinct and court district. The town initially supported two general stores, a blacksmiths shop, and a wagon and stage line to Amboy. However, rich placer mining around Dale soon waned; this, along with the isolation, heat, and lack of water, continued to hamper the town's growth. Mining operations in the area eventually switched to heavy equipment processing in the Pinto Mountains, south of the town, which led to Dale's first slow death. Between 1901 and 1903 water was piped from a newly constructed pumping plant near Dale Dry Lake to the mines in the mountains; and after its completion, the entire town moved eight miles to the southeast, on a flat just below many of the best mines in the area. In addition to all commercial activity that occurred at the first abandoned Dale site, the new town, which also took on the name Dale, could boast a newly installed telephone system, which came from Amboy.

The Virginia Dale mine laid about four miles south of the first Dale, which was adjacent to an unpaved road going by the name Gold Crown Road. This location eventually became the second Dale, or middle Dale about 1904, which was founded by Lyons and Wilson; but the name did not change until it moved a third time.

According to the *Ninth Annual Report of the State Mineralogist* (California), dated December 1, 1889, the Virginia Dale mine had set up a five-stamp mill at the mine site in 1887; however, because of cost it was shut down by 1889, but was operational again by 1896.

Furthermore, a 1916 *California State Mineralogist* report described the Virginia Dale mine, "…the mine is equipped with a Lane mill, built about 6 or 7 years ago. The mill was not operated to any great extent, only about 1,000 to 1,500 tons of ore having been treated. Active work was commenced on this group in the summer of 1896 at which time a 5-stamp mill was moved there from Twentynine Palms."

The Virginia Dale mine actually consisted of six claims in the Black and Pinto Mountains, and, in the beginning, all water was piped to it from the vicinity of Old Dale. Living quarters were located southwest of the mill site on a hill. One of the last known accounts of structures remaining was in 1965, when a large bunkhouse was described as about to fall down.



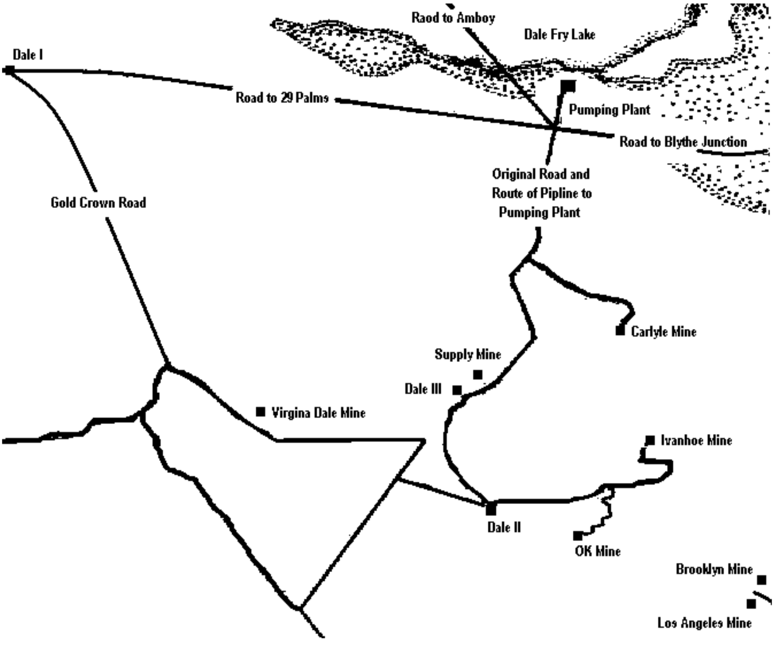
Gold Crown mine mess hall in the background
(Anno Sanger photograph)

The exact date the Supply Mine was initially discovered is not known; however, there are some accounts of its operation by 1900. It was reported in the *Mining and Metallurgical Journal* from March 2, 1900 that three men going by the name Messrs, Rich, and Zugus were operating the Supply Mine; there was, however, no mention of Frank Sabathe, who we know was also a partial owner. The Supply Mine was located another two miles further up Gold Crown Road (south). The rise and success of the Supply Mine was the primary reason for the second and last of the moves of Dale. Dale III was located about a half mile from the Supply Mine, which was off from Gold Crown Road. The town quickly took on the name again of

New Dale and the post office was eventually moved there in 1915, just before the town actually closed in 1917.

In 1919, J. Smeaton Chase wrote in his book *California Trails*,

> This Dale, I learned, was Dale the third. As the old ‘leads’ ore veins of ore ‘peter out’ and new ones are discovered, the mining camp ‘follows the lead’ in a literal sense. The present camp is about a dozen years old, and is supported by one good-sized gold mine, the Supply, though there are a few smaller mines in the locality. Fifty to sixty men, half a dozen women, and one badly spoiled baby made of the population at the time of my stay. The mine is a highly organized affair, with electric-lighted buildings and a water supply pumped from wells six-miles away. Day and night the whirr and crash of engines goes on unceasing. It was strange to wake at night and hear the roar of machinery in that remote place…


Raod to Amboy
Dale Fry Lake
Dale I
Road to 29 Palms
Pumping Plant
Road to Blythe Junction
Original Road and Route of Pipline to Pumping Plant
Gold Crown Road
Carlyle Mine
Supply Mine
Dale III
Virgina Dale Mine
Ivanhoe Mine
Dale II
OK Mine
Brooklyn Mine
Los Angeles Mine

Map: Dale I was located near the left hand corner of the map. The town first moved south to a site near the OK mine, followed by another move north near the Supply mine, where it ended with the mining operations in the area.

Above the Supply mine was the Ivanhoe mine – the Brooklyn mine, Los Angeles mine and the Iron Age mine could also be found in the area. This most certainly made Dale II and III close enough for miners to frequent and prosper, which was the principle reason for the continual moves of the town.

Interestingly, when traveling from Dale I to Dale II and III, along Gold Crown Road, laid the Gold Crown and Golden Egg mines, among other mines and homesteads. As mentioned earlier, the town finally ceased operation in 1917, although some mining activity continued for several more years thereafter.

An extensive research discovered the following archival information about the Dale mining district, which gives us an interesting historical look at the areas development during the period 1883-1917.

Between 1883 and 1917, 12 historical names can be found, which relate to the three Dale towns, including, Virginia Dale, Dale City, Old Dale, New Dale, Dale Pumping Station, Freighters Dale, Dale, Dale II, Dale the third, Supply Dale, Burt's Well and Lyon's Well.

In 1883, Lew Curtis also discovered placer gold in the Dale basin, which led to John Burt digging his well for his arrastre; this became the primary source of water for the area's future population growth of some 1,000 people, before the area began to decline, which led to the town's first move toward the end of 1903.

In 1884, the *Annual Report by the Director of the United States Mint* said, 15 miles east of 29 Palms Springs, several lodes ranging in width from 6 inches to 3 feet have been found, some of the lodes, worked by Arrastra, yielding $100.00 per ton."

Reports from 1885 said that a steady stream of miners headed to the Dale mining area, which led to the development of the town of Dale I. Freight hauler C.D. Hamilton was regularly transporting supplies between Banning and Dale with his six horse team, which took about nine days for a round trip.

By 1887, initial milling operations at the Virginia Dale mine were not performing well, which led to the temporary stoppage of operations by 1889; and the division of the partnership between Johnny "Quarts" Wilson and Tom Lyons shortly before. Lyons gained control thereafter.

John Burt discovered the Brooklyn and OK mines in 1890, which were worked until 1899. The Brooklyn Mining Company was formed in 1901 and remained active until late 1915.

A one inch pipeline from Dale Dry Lake to the mines for milling operations was completed in 1903; 2,000 gallons of water were required to process every tone of ore.

For the most part, during the summer months almost all economic activity ceased; in fact, it was not uncommon to see temperatures rise to 128 degrees.

On September 15, 1892, the California State Mining Bureau released their *Eleventh Report of the State Mineralogist* book, which described the Monte Negras District (Black Mountain District) that laid about 35 miles from Cadiz (Amboy area), 16 miles north of Eagle Mountain (Desert Center area) and 6 miles south of the Virginia Dale mine (Dale area). A few specifics of interest were also mentioned, which made permanent development almost impossible, “Wood is not obtainable at all in the vicinity of the mines, and water is scarce, but has been obtained by sinking a well in a basin at Virginia Dale… a shaft was sunk 140 feet in the wash 3 miles south of the most southerly Monte Negras mines, but no water was obtained.” This information certainly gives us a clue as to why the Dale mining district was developed rather than the Monte Negras mining district.

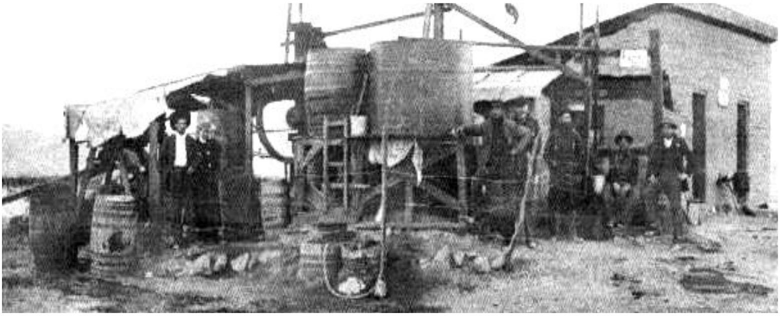
By 1893, county officials began to take notice; however, because no reliable survey was done of the region, making mining claims remained a problem. In some cases, miners made claims in both San Bernardino and Riverside Counties to protect their rights; and some press reports stated that the Dale Mining District was actually in San Diego County.

In a report published on September 15, 1896 by the California State Mining Bureau, called the *Thirteenth Report of the State Mineralogist*, described the area north of Dale I, the Old Woman’s Mountain range, as showing veins of gold and silver and also silver led; and that several groups of claims, including the Winston mines and Courtright and McDonald mines, were being worked at the north end of the range – eight miles south east of Danby. Moreover, the report also maintained that allegations of discoveries of gold in the scoriaceous besalt region near Old Woman’s Springs were not true.

Dale I mill works, believed to be at Steve's Point, circa 1890s

Furthermore, it was reported that the Gypsy mine laid 4 miles west of "Virginia Dale" and had a 115' shaft, with drifts running 50' and 100' from the surface. All hoisting was done by a horse-whim and a one-stamp mill was built at the dry lake, presumably Dale Dry Lake, for the purpose of prospecting claims in the region; the mill was gas operated.

As mentioned in other sections of this book, the two prominent areas of the day consisted of the Dale mining district and the Eagle Mountain mining district; nevertheless, there was also another district, which lay between the two, which was the Monte Negras District. The district first came under consideration in 1890 with the development of several prominent mining claims, including the Columbus, Porcupine, Republican, Summit and Venus mines; all of which were near the Dale side of the district due to an abundance of available water.



Lyon's Well, circa 1890s

Of even further interest, about 45 miles east of Danby, between Dale I and the Colorado River, the Onward mine was operated by owners L. Gray and Brothers of Phoenix, Arizona; by its description, the Onward mine certainly laid near Blythe Junction, the center of No Man's Land.

The S.S mine was owned and operated by T.B. Lyon of San Bernardino, California in1894; the mine was very close to Lyon's well, near the town of Dale I.

Starting in January 1896, Dale Mining District claims were being made almost daily and the area was inundated with miners and prospectors. In fact, later that year, two supervisors from San Bernardino County visited the area and were surprised by the amount of business activity; especially when they witnessed twenty freight wagons loaded with supplies on their way to Dale. A United States Post Office first opened in November and in December the Dale Judicial Township was created by the San Bernardino County Board of Supervisors. And starting in early 1897, a new road was constructed between Amboy and Dale, which enhanced economic activity greatly and allowed a stage line to open regular service at a cost of $5.00 per person.

Starting in 1897, the Star King Mine was fast becoming one of the best prospects for future development in the Dale Mining District; by November 20, it had a primary shaft over 100 feet deep and over 100 feet in drifts with each section showing good deposits of ore. Mr. A.E. Saxton had bought the claim from Mr. Botsford, who owned the Brooklyn mine.

The O.K. mine was perhaps the largest mine in the area in 1897, and according to assay reports, perhaps the riches in the area as well.

In August of 1897, F.C. Baird of Rialto, California developed a quartz mill and cyanide plant in Dale.

In September of 1897, Dale I witnessed a building boom, with 5 new adobe buildings being built, which housed an assay office and two saloons; among other businesses.

The Gold Basin group had ten claims adjoining each other, with several shafts and ledges over 100 feet deep. Each shaft was producing good ore deposits, some ranging as high as $266 per ton. Mr. Isaac Reed, the principal owner of the Gold Basin group had been working hard to bring the shafts to full production; of which, he built a good road to each of his ten claims, where a central camp was set up to work them.

Two fellows named Herley and White dug a well about five miles south of Dale I in a big wash, which was a much-expected event to the miners in the area; this meant that they would not have to travel as far for water. The new well was centrally located within the district.

On November 20, 1897, the Vogledebob mine was owned by Hardy & Wellington. Porter Davis and J.C. Goff were conducting assessments and doing several extensions in the Gold Basin area. Three-quarters of a mile west of Gold Basin, Captain Covington of Redlands, and the Frink Brothers of Old San Bernardino had success with the old Wallthall claim; with just a 15' deep shaft the group developed a $15,000 mine.

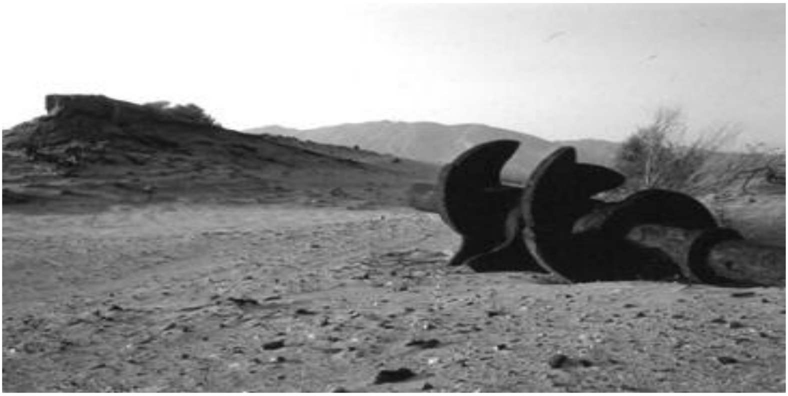
Reports from December 17, 1897 stated Dale had become quite lively that part of the year. Miners and mine owners frequented the town as part of their annual assessment work; weather was pleasant and people were hopeful to get a lot of work done before summer.

Later that month, two fellows named Curtis and Donovan had struck it rich doing some basic placer mining in the area. They were averaging between $30 to $50 dollars a day working a small dry washer, and had made over $5,000 so far. Other miners were also making good wages by placer mining the area and brought out many large nuggets; like A. Meriam who found a $40 nugget placer mining the Dale area in 1897. Mr. Barr went to Dale I to conduct an assessment for Fink and Curtis. Lee and Hinkly discovered several fine rock specimens, and, as a result, continued to develop their mine with high hopes.

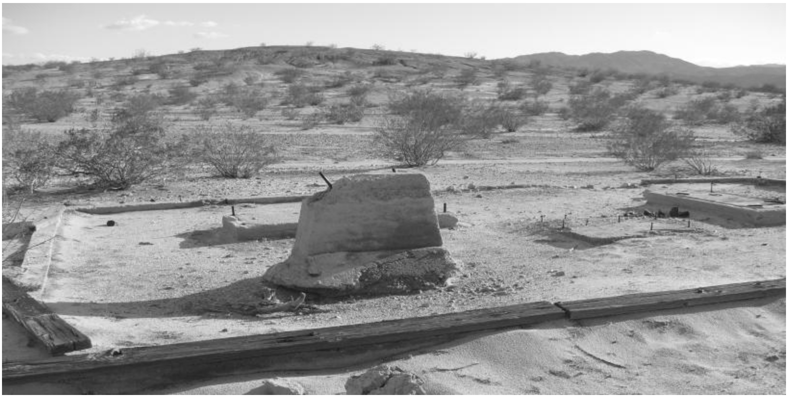
A.C. Goacher had hired several men to work his numerous claims and was making a good profit. J.D. Rankins and his unnamed partner started to work on their Bon Ton Mine, and were working a good grade of ore out of a large ledge; they had two claims on the ledge and were working several shafts about ten miles south of Dale. J.G. Young took a lease and bond on the Jim Budd mine and struck a high grade of free gold within red oxide copper with assays in the hundreds. Jack Killian and his unnamed partner took out several tons of good ore and were making plans to take it to the little mill in Dale. Mr. Meacham recently indicated he planned to move his mill from Twentynine Palms to Dale. Dale was booming and many people were suggesting another stamp mill is needed there to do custom work for the miners in the area.

In January 1898, it was reported that mill owner C.F. Baird was running his operation continuously and his cyanide plant had a capacity of twenty tons a day; and the operations gold bricks were shipped out every week.

Mexicans were also known to frequent the area and, as a result of their hard work, had a great deal of success; in 1898 there were reports that two Mexican men came in with $40.00 and $30.00 nuggets and that earning $200.00 a month was common working their simple placer operations.



Bell crank from a stamp mill near Dale I in the 1960s
(Anno Sanger photograph)



Dale I mill ruins south side of highway 62

On June 1, 1898, it was reported that the Brooklyn mine was running a 300-foot tunnel. The mine was owned by H.B. Botsford, and was 112 foot deep at the time.

On June 15, 1898, it was reported that the Ferguson Brothers had struck plenty of water and, as a result, were erecting a 5-stamp mill on their mine in the Dale Mining District. As well, Mr. Harn, Mr. Meachem, J. J. Arbois, and Rich Sherman each erected new stamp mills in Dale. These four mills greatly increased the returns from the Dale Mining District.

Old well near the ruins of Dale I

Dale I mill ruins north side of highway 62

It was again reported on February 15, 1899 that the population of Dale stood at 150 people, it had four working stamp mills, three, of which, had two stamps, and the fourth had one. There were two general merchandise stores, a post office, one restaurant, a lodging house, an assay office, and two saloons. There was a great deal of activity around town and in the Dale mining area. Reports that water could be easily had at a depth of 100 to 125 feet were common. The Leota mine had been showing promise and recent discoveries of iron ore in the area had Dale gossip talking about a transcontinental railroad going to it.

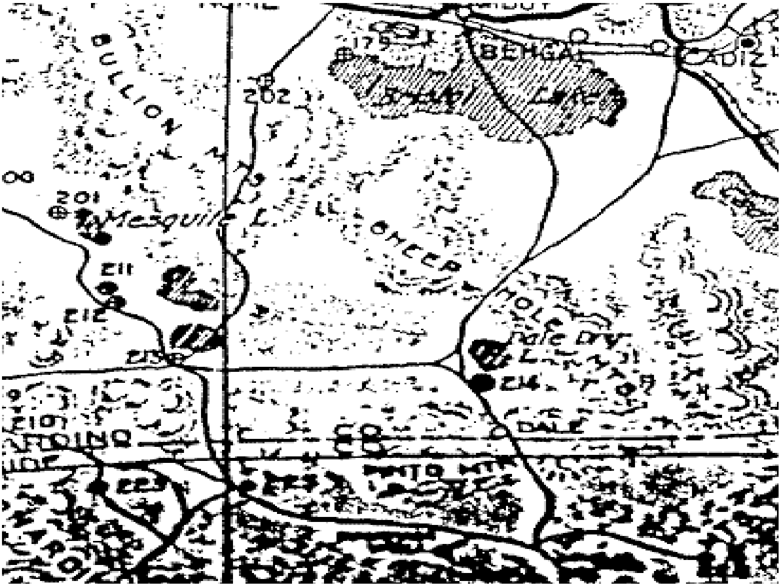
Dale I mill ruins south side of highway 62 atop a hill

On March 8, 1899, it was further reported that Dale continued to grow; there were now three stores, two restaurants, two saloons, one hotel, five mills, a post office, a barbershop, a justice's office, a constable's office, and an assay office. Mr. Ferguson had developed a five-stamp mill at Burt's well and a two-stamp mill in Twentynine Palms; and the Virginia Dale camp was fast becoming the best gold mining opportunity in Southern California.

It was additionally reported on April 6, 1899 that Dale continued to grow with each passing day. The stage company servicing the area was talking about adding a stage to the line if the town continued to grow. Local businessmen said that business activity had doubled almost overnight. Dr. Bedford hauled 200 tons of ore from the Leota Mine to Meachem's mill.

Ellerman and St. German claimed they would move their mill up to their new strike and would get their water from Burt's Well. Mr. Frank Wellington and Mr. Pope were in Dale that week and took visits to their claims. Mr. Wellington, along with Dr. Palmer, owned several claims at Gold Basin, which was south of the O.K. Mine.

A new placer strike was struck three miles east of Gold Basin by Warren and Sullivan; both men were taking out about $200 a week with one little dry washer. A young Englishman named H.T. Gravely had developed a quartz mine about four miles south of Dale in the Humbug mountains; the mine was assaying as much as $125 a week and was about 70 foot deep and ten foot wide.

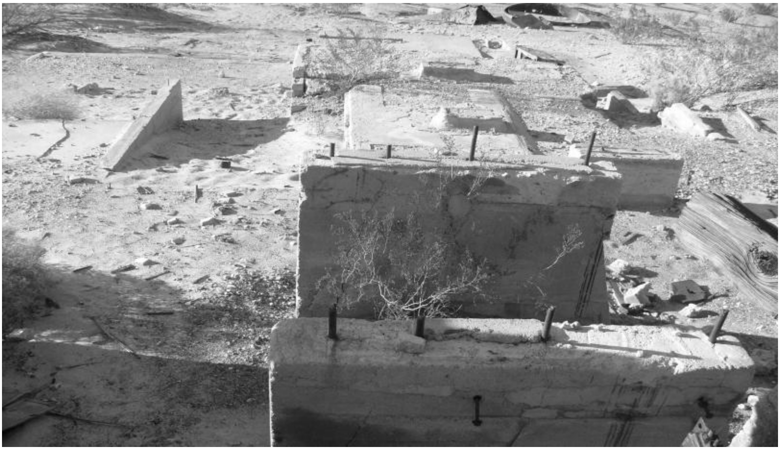


Map of Dale area - circa 1914

And on April 20, 1899 it was reported that the owners of the best mines in the Dale Mining District were working faithfully to convince mining experts that the ledges in the district would go down and were worth pursuing; however, there were also other people saying that the area was not sustainable.

O.K. mine manager Joe Ingersoll reported that his mine was fast becoming the best in the district; the mine had gone down 200’ with a ledge over 400’ wide at the surface. Ingersoll, who was an inexperienced miner, was credited with hiring men who understood the business, which had helped production. He did not hire men who did not know how to work the cyanide operations, which had helped production greatly. Ingersoll also wanted to go down another 100', where his shaft would be at 300'.

View of Dale Dry Lake



Old mill works ruins at Steven Point, east of Dale I

The Greenhorn conducted a 12' prospect shaft. The M.L. also conducted two 10' prospect shafts. The O.K. had developed a 20' shaft and another 200' shaft; it also had a 250' drift down about the first 50', and narrowed as it descended. The Gold Basin No. 2 had two shafts, one about 50' deep and the other about 110' deep. The Single Standard Mine had a tunnel about 50' into the mountain. The shaft of the Dale mine was about 30' deep. The Jumbo mine had a shaft about 80' deep and another about 130' deep, each having a 100 foot drift. The White Star mine had a shaft about 150' deep, with some drifts and a tunnel over 1,400' in length.

On May 4, 1899, reports said that Brooklyn mine owners Ames and Yager had all their machinery on site at their mine; they planned to process the ore there than ship it down to Dale. Owners of the Ivanhoe mine, Ellerman and German, just completed their mill on site as well. G.H. Harn, one of the owners of the O.K. mine had returned to the Dale Mining District; he was generally considered the shrewdest and most experienced miner in the Dale region. Joe Ingersoll left for San Bernardino on the morning's stage; he was carrying two bricks of gold, weighing 160 ounces, both taken from the O.K. mine. The mill owned by J.J. Arbios' was still running ore from the Jean Mine.

In July of 1898, the Star Mail Service from Palm Springs Railroad Station to Dale started; the 60 mile route left Palm Springs at 6:00 am on Wednesday and arrived Thursday morning, and likewise, the service left Dale each Monday morning and arrived Tuesday morning.

Interestingly, in 1898 the San Bernardino County Register had only 34 voters registered in Dale, which listed their occupations as 21 miners, 3 millmen, 2 teamsters, 1 blacksmith, 1 cook, 1 hotelman, 1 lawyer, 1 assayer, 1 whisky store proprietor, 1 carpenter and 1 post master; in spite of the fact that over 1,000 miners were in the area.

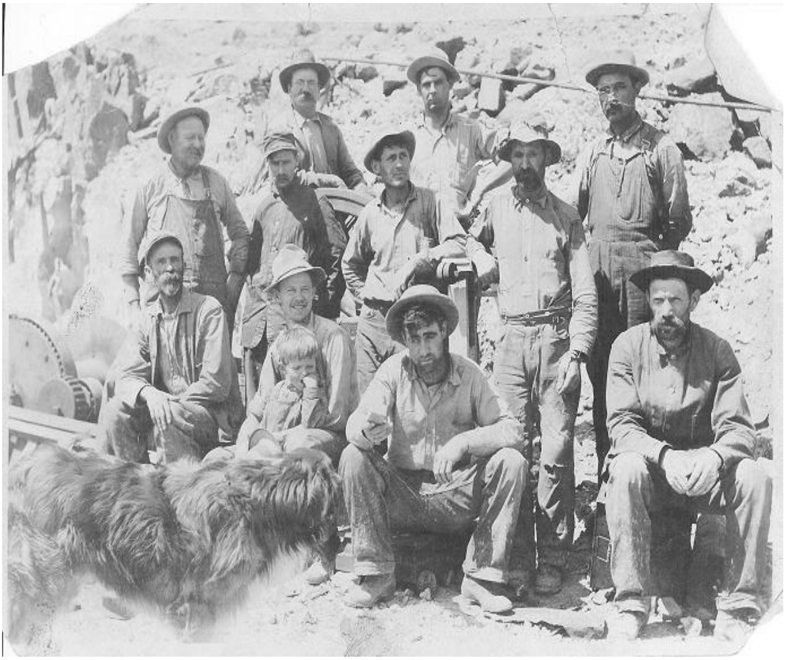
By late 1898, placer gold was selling for $18.00 an ounce; and miners with little to know experience were earning more than the going wage of the day and could earn as much as $10.00 a day working their own claims.

On November 6, 1898, Dale voted for its first Justice of the Peace, which ended in a tie between Ike Reed and T.B. Pierson; consequently, a special election was held on January 17, 1899 that resulted in Reed's victory.

An interesting transformation started about 1899; mine operators realized that they could save about $3.50 a ton by pumping water to their mines for processing rather than hauling ore down to Dale. This simple revelation was the beginning of the end for the first Dale, which started its slow demise.

It was further reported on February 20, 1900 that J.J. Ellerman of the Ivanhoe mine was pulling out some high-grade ore. Porter Davis had made another promising strike near Gold Basin; the strike was said to have been discovered by accident. Placer miners in the area were also doing well; one man found a $30 nugget last week.

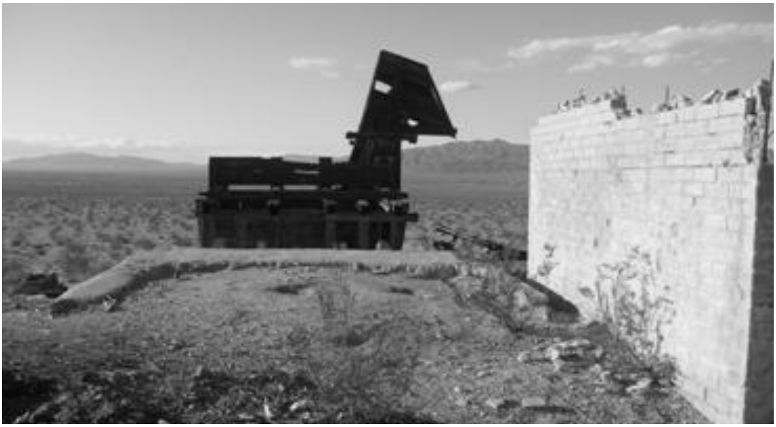
Three men known as Messrs, Coats, and Sullivan recently discovered the largest placer strike in the area; these men reported that they were averaging about $1 each pan they dug.



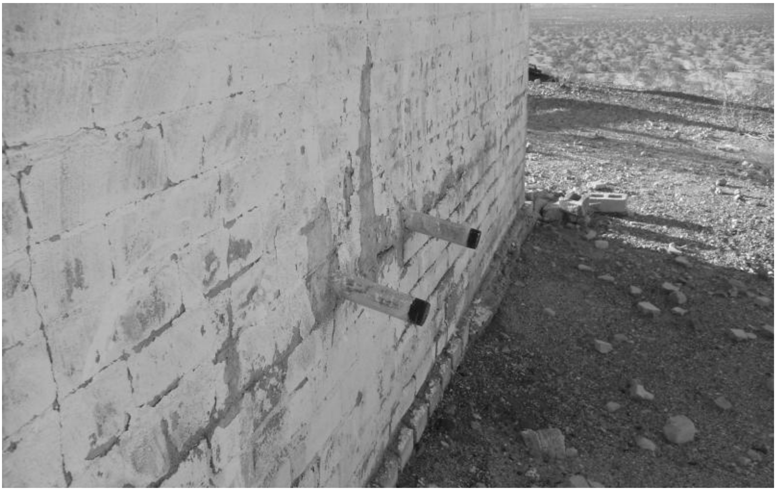
Dale Miners (Lisa Rieger photograph)

Looking down from Steven Points – mine and mill site – the valley is inundated with old foundations

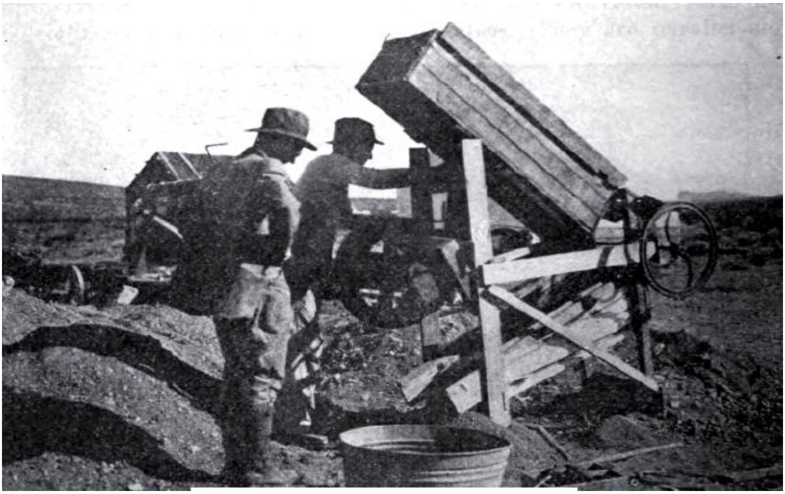
It is not exactly known who originally located the Supply Mine; however, by 1900 it, along with the O.K. mine, belonged to the Seal of Gold group of partners, Jim Cheatem, Joseph Ingersoll, H.A. Landwehr and Frank Sabathe. During the next few years these partners paid more attention to the O.K. mine than the Supply mine, with the O.K. getting a ten stamp mill, two cyanide plants and a well timbered 800 foot shaft; whereas the Supply mine only received three two stamp mills, in spite of the fact that it produced much more gold. Both mines eventually received water from Dale Dry Lake.



Dale I mill ruins, south side of highway 62 atop a hill, east of other mill ruins on Steven Point



Old mill works ruins at Steven Point, east of Old Dale

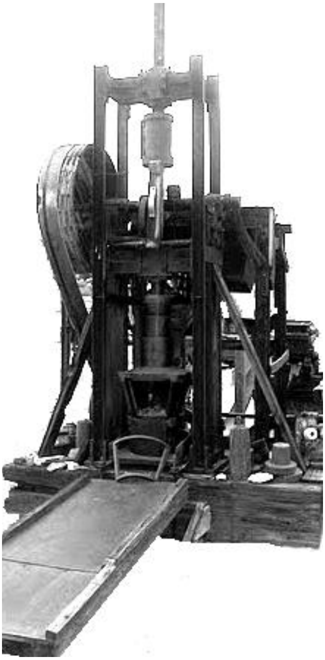


A typical hand driven dry concentrator from 1914

Because of stamp mill development about 1900 in the mountains south of Dale, the town's people were talking about moving closer to the miners. Many people believed this move would be beneficial, as the town would be closer to the best mines in the district. As it stood at the time, travelers and miners had to travel up to twelve miles and often left the area in disgust. The O.K. Mine was nearing the 300 foot level and continued to advance at about two feet a day.

The North Star Mining and Milling Company was getting good results on the Gipsey and Star Mines; at about 60 feet the Star Mine was running about $60 per ton; H.J. Parker of the North Star Company was superintending the work at the mine. Thompson and Duff found copper of good quality, and had developed a ledge about fifty feet wide; this strike had opened the eyes of the local prospectors – who previously only thought about mining for gold. Of interest, almost every ledge in the area showed some signs of copper.

On March 2, 1900, mines in the area never looked so good and the Dale Mining District had never seen so much development. The O.K. mill was set up at the mine and was ready to start crushing ore. The Brooklyn mill was also running continuously and was producing the areas highest-grade ore. Messrs, Rich, and Zugus of the Supply Mine also made a significant strike; they dug down about 200 feet before they did a cross-cut into the handling wall, where they discovered good ore only two feet in. They did not know how long this ledge was, but were hopeful the strike would continue to pay well. There was also another new placer strike about six miles east of Gold Basin.



A typical single stamp mill, a type commonly used during the Dale I era

On April 20, 1900, the O.K. mill had been running night and day since its move to the O.K. mine site; it never stopped, except to add additional stamps, which the company did to increase capacity.

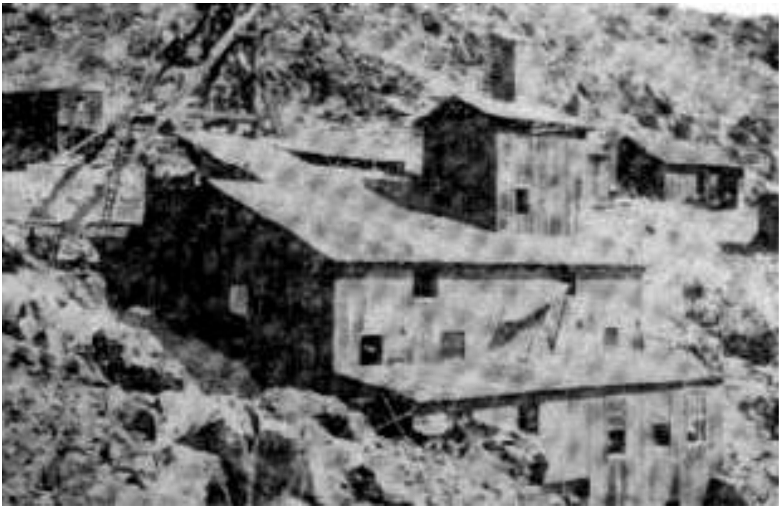
The Supply mine was about to put in a ten stamp mill to handle the new strike of ore that had been recently discovered. E.R. Halesworth, of the Carlisle mine, discovered a body of high-grade ore at the 250-foot level. The Carlisle mine was one of the newest and best properties in the Dale mining district and was owned by William Halesworth.

The Ivanhoe mine also found quality ore of unlimited quantity; owner J.J. Ellerman was a spunky and industrious man, who said his mines success would likely continue.

Just before the summer of 1900, the Dale Post Office moved into the mountains, which would become the new location of Dale. And soon after, a new freight station was built on the west end of Dale Dry Lake, presumably Frank Sabathe's station, which cut about two miles off the old route to Dale; this move severely cut off the first Dale's economic activity.

Bale Basin ruins, circa 1910

Undoubtedly, Dale success ended by 1903, which forced it into the mountains in the south; however, mining activity continued in the area for many years, as was reported in further mining journals.



Dale mining works, circa 1914

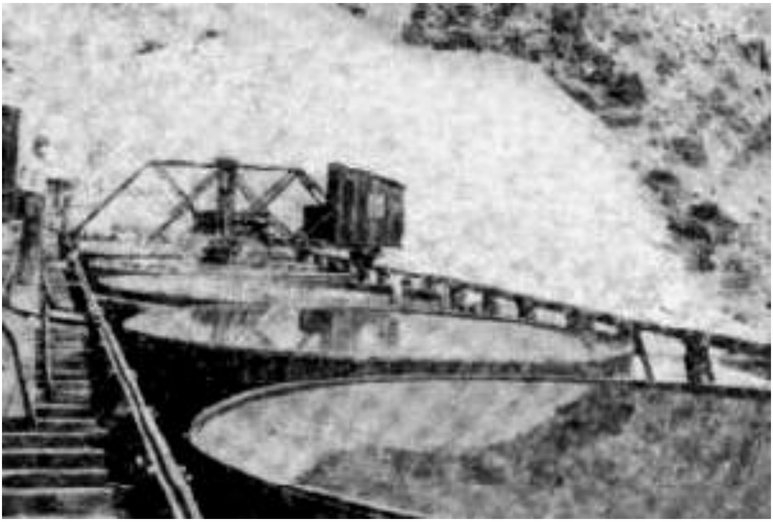
Interestingly, the McCabe's son, Carl, died on January 11, 1904, and was buried across a wash south of Dale II; and a small heart shaped marble headstone was placed there, with the description "Carl P. – Son of Percy J. and Adaline D. McCabe – October, 17, 1903 – January 11, 1904 – Baby." It remained where it was placed for almost half a century until it was stolen by souvenir hunters.

Today, however, a small brass plaque has been placed at this location, which was donated by E. Clampus in 1974.

Dale mining works, circa 1914

San Bernardino County owned and operated a well in Dale I until 1908 and many travelers continued to stop at the ruins to refresh themselves and hide from the heat and sun; however, by 1912, many of the adobe walled buildings started to crumble.

Dale mining works, circa 1914

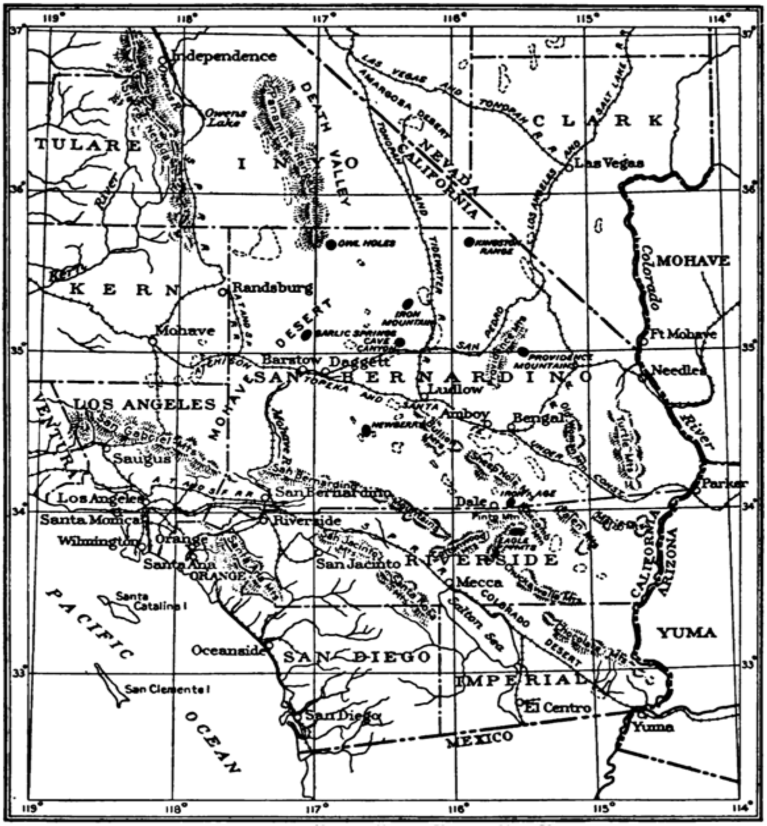


Dale mining works, circa 1914

Dale mining works, circa 1914

In 1908, the Seal of Gold partnership was dissolved with Landwehr buying his partners out; it is unknown what the others received, but Ingersoll received $75,000 for his holdings. Nevertheless, in 1909, Landwehr's new investor group soon went into litigation, which resulted in an English mining engineer named Slater taking over, until Landwehr was able to get an injunction against Slater in 1910.

Landwehr eventually leased his operations to United Greenwater that took over in 1914. During it's nearly three years of operations United Greenwater took out over a million dollars of gold.

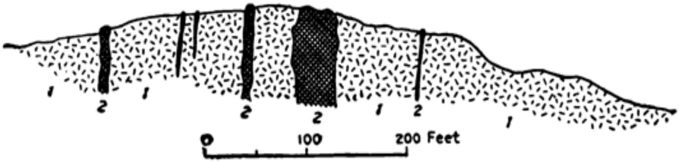

Independence
Owens Lake
TULARE
INYO
DEATH VALLEY
CLARK
Las Vegas
NEVADA
CALIFORNIA
KERN
Randsburg
Mohave
MOHAVE
Ft Mohave
Needles
Barstow
Daggett
SAN BERNARDINO
Ludlow
Amboy
Bengal
LOS ANGELES
VENTURA
Saugus
Los Angeles
Santa Monica
Wilmington
Orange
Santa Ana
ORANGE
San Bernardino
Riverside
San Jacinto
RIVERSIDE
Dale
Mecca
Parker
Colorado River
ARIZONA
YUMA
Santa Catalina I
PACIFIC OCEAN
San Clemente I
Oceanside
SAN DIEGO
IMPERIAL
El Centro
San Diego
MEXICO
Yuma
Salton Sea
COLORADO DESERT
MOHAVE DESERT

A 1909 map showing the Dale Mining District

In 1908, the United States Department of the Interior published its book *Mineral Resources of the United States* that gave a detailed account of San Bernardino County's gold output for the year, which said that 8,732.22 fine ounces of gold and 67,366 fine ounces of silver were produced, with the Dale district being one of the year's best producers, and specified the following, "The Supply and O.K. mines, at Dale, have one 6 stamp and one 10 stamp mill. The property has been in litigation… The Virginia Dale Mining Company, at Dale, which has a 40 stamp Lane mill made only a small yield."

In 1909, the United States Department of the Interior published its *Contributors to Economic Activity*, where it gave several previously assumed conclusions, like the origin of the name of Dale (II),

> Dale, so named from the Virginia Dale gold mine near it, is a mining camp of about a half dozen houses just north of the boundary between San Bernardino and Riverside counties. It is connected with Amboy, on the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway, by a stage road 45 miles long with biweekly service, but it can also be reached from Mecca, on the Southern Pacific Railroad. Dale is the only town in this part of the Mohave and Colorado deserts between the two transcontinental lines.



A 1914 sketch from the book Iron Ores by Edwin C. Eckel showing iron ore deposits near Dale I

Virginia Dale mine ruins

This 1909 report gives us proof that Dale II was still near the Virginia Dale mine, before it was moved up the mountain a few years later. By the summer of 1909, Dale II was nothing of its former glory, most certainly because of the ongoing litigation between the partners of the Supply Mine; however, within months the town's activity again picked up once the mine opened again.

Ok mine ruins

Moreover, a unique 1910 description detailed Dale II as having one general store, a blacksmith shop and a deserted barbershop; and a red-light district on a hill to the north, which was commonly referred to as the Mayor's Residence. There were also two saloons, the Dale and the Shamrock; the Shamrock was owned by Ike Reed and the Dale Saloon was owned by Percy McCabe.

In fact, in a July 4, 1914 edition of *Engineering and Mining Journal*, it said the Greenwater Company had reopened and extended the Supply mine and was receiving good findings; they had also spent some $30,000 cleaning up the camp, where they added new buildings. Moreover, the Ivanhoe mine and Carlite group was about to resume its seasonal operations.

Supply mine ruins

With United Greenwater's development of the Supply and OK in 1914, Dale III thrived for a couple more years; and was visited by J. Smeaton Chase in 1915 where he reported the population at about 60 people, before its eventual collapse by 1917, once water was struck at 1200 feet in the Supply Mine.

Nevertheless, even after the town ceased operations, miners continued to frequent it and use many of its facilities; in fact, during the 1920's mail continued to be delivered and left in open slots and pool balls were still on the pool tables.

The Virginia Dale mine remained active off and on until 1937. Moreover, the Carlisle mine, (or Carlyle) which was first worked at the start of the 20th century, was reactivated in 1939 until1941, when a mill was placed on the property. And for a short time after World War II, a few of the gold mines in the area were reactivated briefly, but due to high operational costs and low gold prices, mining operations were again closed a few years later.

In 1942, because of World War II, the Virginia Dale mine was closed by Executive Order, which resulted in metal scrappers entering the area that essentially stripped the mines of all metal pipes, etc; which basically ended any hope of reopening the mines; as a result, mine losses were staggering.

Frank Sabathe's depot site between Dale I and Dale Dry Lake

In conclusion, on Saturday June 3, 2006, over a hundred years later, about forty volunteers gathered around the site of the old historic stage stop in what is now called Wonder Valley. With the help of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) these local volunteers cleaned up the site of the freighting and stage stop that served the Dale Mining District and Amboy route as early as 1897. The site was also once the homestead site of Dave and Anna Post. Dave Post, also known as Judge Post, was a local peace officer, who served in nearby Twentynine Palms, and played a role in the 1943 Worth Bagley shooting, which also involved another popular local character, Bill Keys. The ruins of the stage stop had suffered from vandalism; all that remained was a 100-year-old adobe wall that was being used as a jump for off road vehicles. The BLM continues to monitor the area and is conducting ongoing archeological studies. The Dale I stage site ruins is located on Chadwick Road, which is south of Amboy Road; near Melody Knolls.

Chapter 7

Flourishing in Dale

Frank Sabathe's life is an important inclusion into the story of No Man's Land California; for his experiences hold a key to understanding what living was truly like in Dale (I, II & III) and the surrounding area. Yet, Dale is but a memory today, with few written records and ruins remaining. The once thriving town stood on both sides of current State Highway 62, which runs down the middle of the ruins, about forty miles west of Blythe Junction (Rice), the center of No Man's Land California. In fact, if one looks for them, several concrete works of mills are still on the town's site.

As mentioned previously, in 1882, two men known as Johnny "Quarts" Wilson and Tom Lyons left the comfort of the Oasis of Mara in Twentynine Palms and began exploring to the east; however, they never reached the mountain ranges near Blythe Junction, instead, they discovered gold about 20 miles east of Twentynine Palms. In time, a prosperous mining town developed, with area miners congregating around it for entertainment and supplies, and by most accounts, it was a friendly place.

Frank Sabathe and family in Dale I (Lisa Rieger photograph)

The story of Dale is held in three parts, the first town was commonly referred to as Dale; nevertheless, there was also Dale II and Dale III, which were discussed in previous chapters. Dale I initially developed out of a need for supplies shortly after 1885. The town was appropriately named after the Virginia Dale mine, which started Southern California's largest gold strike of the time, called Dale Mining District. In reality, very little mining occurred in the lunar-like *area south of the Amboy and Cadiz rail stations until the discovery of the Virginia Dale Mine in 1885. Wilson and Lyons first organized the Dale Mining District and owned the first 5-stamp mill at a well near Dale Dry Lake, formally known as Burt's Lake. According to Sabathe, who initially camped at a well where the town developed, there were very few people in the area in 1892 when he arrived. Nevertheless, the town grew substantially soon after, and in fact, by the late 1890s, men with few prospects were quickly going to this newly developed mining region around Dale, which was making San Bernardino County one of the richest in the state.*

Dale I held a meager existence until about 1895, when new strikes south of it were discovered and hordes of placer and lode miners came to the area in search of gold. A settlement of adobe structures quickly grew up around the well dug by Lyons (Burt's Well), north of the Virginia Dale Mine. The post office was first established in 1896, followed by a voting precinct and court district. During this early period, two stores, a blacksmiths shop, and a wagon and stage line to Amboy supported the town and almost all-economic activity revolved around mining and the support of miners. Moreover, two mining districts influenced the town's development, the Dale and Eagle Mountain Mining District's, which laid to the southeast.

As a boy in France, Sabathe could only dream of one day coming to America. His reason, however, was not a simple one; in order to escape three years of compulsory military service in France, Frank's father gave him his dream by sending him to the United States when he was only 15 years of age. Sabathe's first stop in the United States was in New Orleans, which, at the time, had a great many French transplants, and was an old French territory long before the United States acquired it as part of the Louisiana Purchase in 1803, for 3 cents an acre.

In time, Sabathe made his way into Texas, where he quickly learned the ways of American frontier life. Barely speaking English at the time, he purchased a horse for $5, only to learn later that he had been swindled into taking possession of a twelve-year-old, which died shortly after and forced him to walk most of the way to California. Sabathe eventually made his way to Los Angeles by 1887; most of the way, some 1,400 miles, he traveled on foot with another French immigrant boy. However, before getting there, the boys first followed the Southern Pacific track line for two months until a small unit of cavalry troops escorted them across part of the desert, where they were able to ride on horseback for three days. Luckily for the boys, troops had been sent into the territories because of rampaging Indians. They, in due course, made their way across the bed of the Salton Sea to Indio.

Amboy Depot and rail (Lisa Rieger photograph)

One of the first experiences Sabathe and his young friend had with an Indian is an interesting tale. When the boys arrived in Indio, they discovered one who was herding cattle in the middle of date country. The friendly native asked the boys if they would purchase him a bottle of whisky, which they attempted to do. Upon entering a local store, the storekeeper asked if they were buying the whisky for any Indians, which was illegal at the time. The storekeeper told the boys that they would be locked up if they were planning to do so; upon hearing this news, Sabathe went back and returned the money to their now unhappy acquaintance.

In time, Sabathe made it to Los Angeles where he first gained employment on a survey gang working the Santa Anita Mountains. Over the next few years, he also worked in a sawmill, a slaughter-house, and as a cowboy in the San Bernardino area. Eventually, he met Jack Killian, who offered him a partnership in a mine about 30 miles east of Twentynine Palms; so in 1892, Sabathe loaded a wagon full of supplies and went off to work his half interest in this unnamed mine. While traveling through Twentynine Palms in 1892, he discovered there were only one white man and forty-five Indians living there. The two men eventually camped at a well in the Dale I area; however, at the time it was called Burt's Well. Only because Killian wanted to leave the desolate area, the partnership split up, leaving Sabathe to his own fate. In a short time, Sabathe earned enough money to grubstake himself, where he made fourteen claims in the area, the biggest being the Supply mine. The Supply mine would eventually produce more than $2,000,000 in gold and would boast a shaft over 1,300 feet straight down.

DAK
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Lake View Hotel

View from Lake View Hotel toward Amboy with Amboy road going north

To the left of Amboy road is the old road to from Dale to Amboy

Looking south from Lake View Hotel to the top of Sheephole Pass

To work his claims, Sabathe purchased a wagon and a ten-horse team to carry his much needed supplies. Regular trips were first made between Banning and his claims, a 90-mile, ten-day trip. However, after a rail depot was established in Amboy, he constructed a new road to the area, where he could transport passengers and cargo on a regular basis, which was a much closer trip. Sabathe also hauled for miners and merchants in the area, and as his business grew additional wagons were bought and drivers were hired; $30 a ton fee was normally charged. As the town grew and prospered between 1892 and 1903, he perhaps became one of the area's most influential men in Dale I, and was commonly referred to as its first unofficial mayor.

Frank Sabathe's horse team traveled from Amboy to Dale I, II & III (Lisa Rieger photograph)

In a letter dated December 3, 1896, Sabathe transported a fellow named J. C. Allison along the road from Amboy to Dale I. The trip Allison took was exceptionally explicit, describing the dry lake near Amboy and the slow climb to the top of a mountain called Lake View Hotel. According to Allison's description, passengers had to get out of the coach and walk up to the hotel, which was nothing more than a place to sit atop the mountain to rest the animals for an hour or so before completing the trip. Also mentioned, Sabathe normally carried as much as three tons and a water wagon with his ten animal team along the road; at least two times a week. The town of Dale I sat on the side of a small hill and was described at the time as a typical desert mining camp, with several adobe structures, and most people living in tents. There was a store and a post office, a black smith and a stockyard, and a five stamp mill west of town near the hill. The town boasted a community well, which was built about 8 years earlier. Because of the water, all the mine operators brought their ore to Dale I for milling, unless they had an arrastra on site.

By late 1896, almost everyone in Dale I had high expectations for the town, which resulted in the county sending out two supervisors to check on its development a short time before. As well, a petition had recently been circulated asking the county to create a judicial district in the town, which would bring law to the area.

Most people in Dale I were placer miners, but there were also high hopes for a bigger development in the mountains to the south, where large gold claims were being developed. There were several load locations under development, including the O.K. group, Ore Fino, the Brooklyn Group, and the largest was the Virginia Dale; however, all of them were relatively small at the time.

Allison also met the legendary Johnny “Quartz” Wilson, who was notorious for his chatter; it was popularly said the only time he was not talking was when he was drinking. Wilson had recently sold his claim to Allison for $5,235 in gold coin, five girlie pictures, and a jug of Kentucky Whiskey each time he passed by the Twentynine Palms Oasis. Interestingly, the claim would eventually be developed into the Morning Star Mine, which pulled out millions in gold.

During these early years, Sabathe kept so busy he was unable to work his claims; that was until he met a fellow named Boyer, who came from Riverside. As a result of their meeting, Boyer bought a half interest in Sabathe’s holdings for $100 each; which eventually led these two men to form the Seal of Gold Mining Company; whereupon they acquired several more partners and sold stock, raising about $100,000 for mining operations.

Sabathe would eventually take charge of the O.K. mine and in three years it produced over $500,000. To the good fortune of he and his partners, the O.K. mine was perhaps the largest in the area in 1897, and according to assay reports it was fast becoming the riches one as well.

Dale I schoolhouse (Lisa Rieger photograph)

In the next few years, Dale I and the surrounding mining district prospered; in fact, the time between 1897 and 1902 has since become known as the apex of Dale I. However, starting perhaps in 1897, little by little mining activity went south, which was the result of two men named Herley and White who dug a well about five miles south of Dale I in a big wash; something that was a much-expected event to the miners in the area. This meant miner’s would not have to travel to Dale I every time water was needed.

Despite the early gossip of mining success to the south, Dale I prospered; as was reported in December of 1897 that the town had become quite lively during the cooler winter months, with miners and mine owners traveling to the town as part of their annual assessment work. The weather was pleasant that time of the year and people were hopeful to get a lot of work done before the heat of the summer.

Much of the early success in the Dale area was done by placer miners, rather than the larger industrial mines that came a few years later; similar to two men named Curtis and Donovan, who struck it rich. They were averaging $30 to $50 a day working a small dry washer, and had made over $5,000 in a matter of a few months.

Other placer miners were also making above average wages and were bringing out large nuggets, like Mr. Meriam who found a $40 nugget. Moreover, large scale mining operators were also growing substantially, which resulted in a milling backlog; a void that was quickly filled when Mr. Meacham brought his mill from Twentynine Palms.

By 1899, Dale I had five working stamp mills, three had two stamps, and the fourth had one. There were also three general merchandise stores, a post office, two restaurants, a lodging house, an assay office, two saloons, a barbershop, a justice and constable office, a schoolhouse and a population of about 250 people; although there were over 1,000 people in the wider Dale Mining District.

Another Dale I schoolhouse photograph (Lisa Rieger photograph)

An interesting rumor also got started amongst the town's people in 1899 that a transcontinental railroad would go through it after a recent iron ore discovery was found; a rumor that never came to fruition. In addition, it became common knowledge that water could be easily attained in the valley's flatlands at about 100 to 125 feet, although it contained high levels of salt and alkaline.

Moreover, to handle the high milling volume, Mr. Ferguson had developed a five-stamp mill at Burt's well and a two-stamp mill in Twentynine Palms. Local merchants were also boasting that their business had doubled almost overnight; it seemed everyone, including the mine owners, were trying to convince mining experts and investors that the area was prime for continued development.

To add, Frank Sabathe's stage and freighting company, which was servicing the area, was also talking about adding a stage to the line if the town continued its growth.

General store in Dale II (Lisa Rieger photograph)

Men in Dale I, circa 1900 (Lisa Rieger photograph)

All the while, three men known as Messrs, Coats, and Sullivan discovered the largest placer strike in the area, which was averaging about $1 from each pan they dug. However, even during the boom years, naysayers remained; who said the area was unsustainable.

Yet, by the end of the 19th century, everyone in the area agreed that the Dale Mining District had become the best gold mining opportunity in Southern California.

Jeanne Sabathe with baby Dale about 1905 (Lisa Rieger photograph)

General store in Dale II (Lisa Rieger photograph)

In the beginning, Joe Ingersoll managed the O.K. mine, but Sabathe would eventually take over day to day operations upon his departure. Before he left, it was said he had gone down over 200 feet with a ledge over 400 feet wide, and that he was still credited with hiring good men who understood the mining business, which helped production results greatly. It was also said that he never hired a man who did not understand how a cyanide operation worked. Ingersoll frequently traveled to Amboy on Sabathe's stage line and commonly carried bricks of gold on his person.

Despite this initial success, by 1900, townspeople around Dale I were talking about moving south into the mountains. Many people believed it would be beneficial to be closer to the miners who were working in the hills; and that mines were developing mills on site as a result of newly discovered wells near them. As it stood at the time, miners had to travel as far as twelve miles for basic supplies and often left the area in disgust. The O.K., Brooklyn, and Supply mines were up and running, which had all moved much of their milling activity into the mountains. By April, the O.K. mine was running night and day, never stopping except to add additional stamps, which was done only to increase its capacity. The Supply mine was also planning to put in a new ten stamp mill, after a new ore vein was located.

Frank Sabathe navigating the mountain terrain to the mines
(Lisa Rieger photograph)

Nevertheless, the apex period ended rather abruptly, although, a few expected it, because mine owners moved their milling operations to the mines to cut down on hauling fees to the stamp mills in Dale I.

To add, waning placer mining in the area, the isolation of the town, the hellish summer heat, and a lack of good water also continued to hamper Dale’s permanence; but the biggest single issue was the switched to heavy equipment milling operations in the southern Pinto Mountains.

Sabathe recognize many of these early warning signs and reluctantly agreed to Herb Ames’ idea to pump water from Dale I into the mountains, which essentially led to the town’s demise and first move. Between 1901 and 1903, a water pipe was built from a newly constructed pumping plant at Dale Dry Lake to the mines in the south. As a result, by 1903, the entire town made its first move about eight miles to the southeast, on a flat just below the areas mines.

Frank Sabathe in the mountains overlooking Dale I
(Lisa Rieger photograph)

All about this period, Sabathe met his future wife by way of another Frenchman, who had the mail contract between Amboy and Dale I. When Jeanne Marie Gaillard first came to visit Dale I, the two fell in love; after which she postponed her planned trip to Tahiti, going to San Francisco instead. After corresponding for some time, Jeanne moved to Riverside, where Sabathe visited her repeatedly. Every chance Sabathe got, he would ride on horseback to Banning, where he caught a train to Riverside to see his new love. While they made plans to marry, a large stone house was built at the Supply mine site, where they both initially lived after their marriage in 1904; although they also lived a better part of the year in Dale I when the weather was pleasant. Their first child was born in 1905, which they appropriately named Dale.

When the first move was completed, New Dale II could now only boast a post office, store, doctor’s office, two saloons, and a brothel, nothing compared to its former glory.

The new town did, however, develop one luxury when local mine owners pooled $1,500 to develop a phone company, with Ames as the president and Sabathe as Vice President. Together, Ames and

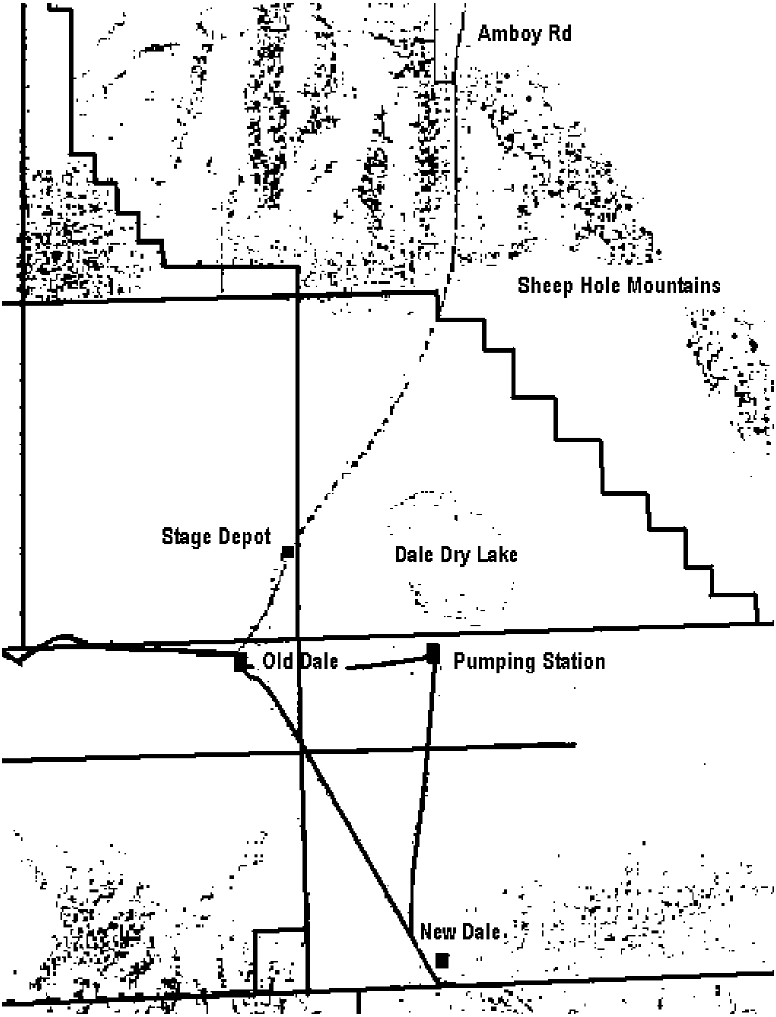
Sabathe constructed a telephone line from Amboy to New Dale II, with poles supplied by the Santa Fe Railroad. The newly developed phone company, in time, received a single trunk line, which was dispersed to seven different locations in the town. Many people, often at the same time, used the community line – with residents regularly wanting to purchase comforts from Los Angeles. Each year until 1906, telephone company shareholders met; after which Sabathe remained president.

When traveling from Dale I to New Dale II, along Gold Crown Road, laid the Gold Crown and Golden Egg mines, among other mines and homesteads; and above the Supply mine was the Ivanhoe mine. The Brooklyn, Los Angeles, and Iron Age mines could all be found in the area. This certainly made Dale II close enough for miners to frequent and shop owners to prosper.

Frank Sabathe's Simplex car carrying passengers
(Lisa Rieger photograph)

Of further interest, there was a well-known robbery in Dale II worth mentioning; which was caused by a worker at the O.K. mine going by the name of Charlie Thomas, who knew Sabathe carried about $18,000 of gold bullion to Amboy about every two weeks and wanted to steal it. After an unsuccessful effort to enlist help from another miner, Thomas decided to commit the robbery himself.

At the time, there were only four known guns in town; two .45s, and a rifle, which were all held at one of the bars, and a .45 that was owned by Joe Wagner, who doubled as a worker at the O.K. mine and the town constable on Saturday nights, or when any problems occurred. Normally, Wagner's gun was held in the post office when not being used.


Amboy Rd
Sheep Hole Mountains
Stage Depot
Dale Dry Lake
Old Dale
Pumping Station
New Dale

1910 map of new Dale (Dale II), Old Dale (Dale I), stage depot and pumping plant

Pointing a rifle he recently acquired, Thomas lined about 20 people up against the wall of the post office when Wagner and Sabathe walked around the corner. Thomas then went mad, where he began screaming obscenities about killing the person he thought squealed to the townspeople about his desire to rob Sabathe, who was well liked and respected about town.

Wagner and Sabathe were then ordered into the line, when all of a sudden Wagner jumped through the post office door, knocking the rifle Thomas was holding down with his shoulder. Upon entering the post office he grabbed his pistol and fired a single shot through the window, which killed Thomas instantly. As a result of his actions, the townspeople simply buried Thomas in an unmarked grave, perhaps in an effort not to be remembered.

Before the town moved one last time, Sabathe sold out his interest in the Supply mine in 1912, and took his wife and three children to San Francisco on their first family vacation. However, after the new owners continued to have problems getting supplies to New Dale II, they contacted Sabathe for help. The new company wired Sabathe in San Francisco and asked him if he would return and take over the freight contract.

After terms were agreed upon, which were $20 a ton to haul freight from Amboy to Dale II, Sabathe spent $12,000 on wagons, horses, and supplies. Within a short time, he also purchased a stagecoach and started charging $5 a passenger over the same route.

Over a three-year period, Sabathe earned about $85,000 conveying freight and passengers from Amboy to Dale II; and because of continued complaints from miners and mine owners, he eventually purchased a Simplex car, thereby cutting the time between locations. Sabathe paid $7,000 for this foreign made car and was able to charge a whopping $50 a traveler for this luxury service, which many people gladly paid.

The rise and success of the Supply mine was the sole reason for the last of the Dale moves, which laid another two miles northeast along Gold Crown Road. To be even more exact, Dale III was located about a half mile from the Supply mine, which was off from Gold Crown Road. The town quickly took on the same name of New Dale, and the post office was moved there in 1915.

There is an interesting account of Dale III by J. Smeaton Chase, who wrote in his book *California Trails* about the town; he traveled to the town in 1915, well before the book was published in 1919. Chase wrote,

> This Dale, I learned, was Dale the third. As the old 'leads' ore veins of ore 'peter out' and new ones are discovered, the mining camp 'follows the lead' in a literal sense. The present camp is about a dozen years old, and is supported by one good-sized gold mine, the Supply, though there are a few smaller mines in the locality. Fifty to sixty men, half a dozen women, and one badly spoiled baby made of the population at the time of my stay. The mine is a highly organized affair, with electric-lighted buildings and a water supply pumped from wells six-miles away. Day and night the whirr and crash of engines goes on unceasing. It was strange to wake at night and hear the roar of machinery in that remote place.

Frank Sabathe in front of the Ripley Hotel while it was being built (Lisa Rieger photograph)

By 1917, World War I had taken away many of the local miners; the war itself started in 1914, yet the United States did not enter until April 6, 1917. Some left for military service, while others realized it was much easier working the war driven factories in urban centers. As well, the price of gold remained the same, yet labor cost forced many of the smaller mines out of business almost immediately; although the larger mining operations held on hoping things would turn around.

The outcome of the war was higher labor cost, which forced Dale III to shut down operations. Many thought its closure was only temporary; however, cost continued to rise, which essentially ended this once thriving town in No Man's Land California forever.

The war, however, created a great need for manganese; and like others, Sabathe left Dale III during this waning period for Blythe, California, where he took up mining for the metal on a royalty basis. The claims he worked delivered several tons of manganese toward the war effort, and when his contract ended he took another interesting turn in his unforgettable life.

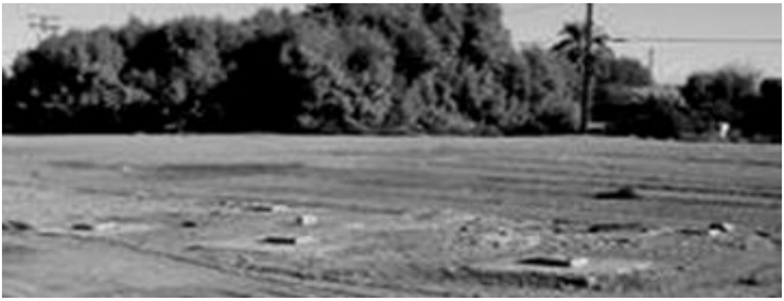
In time, Sabathe met J.M. Nieland, owner of the California Southern Railroad, which owned the fifty-five mile line from Blythe Junction (Rice) to Blythe, California that had been completed in 1916. As a result of their association, Nieland issued the right of way service contract for this route to Sabathe, which kept him in the Blythe area for several years. As the relationship between the two men grew, Nieland eventually gained enough trust in Sabathe to bring him into his plan of building the town of Ripley.

Sabathe was given the contract to layout the new town, which included installing its streets that had curbs in the downtown area; a luxury for the time. Nieland also built a new luxury hotel, costing approximately $185,000; which, upon completion, became the new home for Sabathe and his family, who managed it upon its opening.

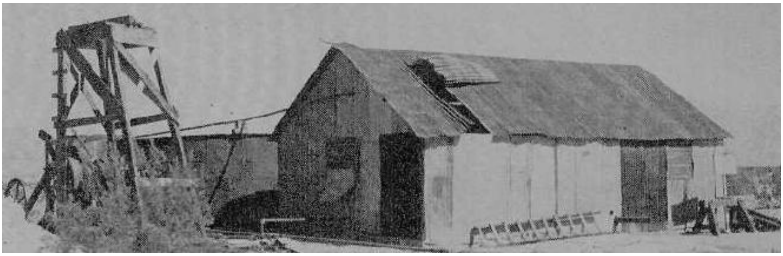
Ripley Hotel flooded in 1922 (Lisa Rieger photograph)

Unfortunately though, in May of 1922, the mighty Colorado River flooded 30,000 acres around Ripley. A break in a levee occurred about three miles away, leaving over 1,000 people without homes. The flood destroyed over 2,000 acres of prime cotton agricultural land and all of Ripley.

According to newspaper reports from the period, the town of Ripley was ripped in half and if levee repairs were not completed, California would permanently lose 10,000 acres to Arizona, all because of the shifted river. Perhaps because of the flood, Ripley would never become the town its founder believed it would be.



Partial ruins of the Ripley Hotel in 2007 (Floie Barrows photograph)



Dale I mill ruins, possibly Steven's Point, circa 1950s
(Ronald D. Miller photograph)

In fact, the floodwaters were five feet high in town, which completely covered the bottom floor lobby of the hotel. As a result, Sabathe sent his family to Los Angeles, while he lived in the hotel's upper floor for 45 days, which was needed for the waters to recede.

After the floodwaters diminished, over two feet of silt remained within the hotel. Consequently, Nieland wanted nothing else to do with it, so it was titled over to Sabathe, but after looking at the tax bill of $200 a month, he also decided to walk away from it.

It was later reported that the ruins of the Ripley Hotel remained until 1965, where locals could still see the watermark along its walls. The remaining ruins today are about 250 yards from the same rail line established by J.M. Nieland when the town was first built. Soon after, Sabathe returned to the Dale Mining District and started prospecting once again.

By 1927, Sabathe went back to buying and selling claims, as well as sinking test holes in the areas surrounding the Dale Mining District; and by 1935, during the Great Depression, he eventually found what he was looking for and called it the Southern Cross Mine. As a result of his discovery, he rounded up several partners and started to develop the mine site. However, after spending over $10,000 trying to drill for water, the partnership was forced to look for land with gravity flow, which eventually led to the acquisition of 160 acres in the growing little community of Morongo; this property included the now famous Morongo Lodge, a popular vacation spot at one time.

Virginia Dale mine ruins, circa 1950s (Ronald D. Miller photograph)

Nevertheless, by the time the Second World War broke out, gold prices became an almost worthless commodity, thus finishing Sabathe' successful mining career. Moving down to the lodge, Sabathe soon found he could not run it successfully. It seemed that even though the books showed over 1,000 customers a month, he was either negligent or hesitant to charge them.

Most of the people who visited were old friends, miners, Caltech scientist, mineralogists, and local cowboys, most of whom took advantage of Sabathe's good nature. After repeated losses, he reluctantly sold the Lodge and moved to the Old Warren Ranch, where he again repeated his generous nature. For years afterwards, he continued to entertain friends and let anyone who wanted to graze their animals on the ranch free of charge; the Old Warren Ranch was the first cattle ranch in the area.

While entertaining his many scientist and mineralogists friends over the years, he ultimately learned that the tailings from the Dale Mining District were just as valuable as the gold he mined decades earlier. In time, Sabathe figured he could simply process the iron, copper, silver, lead, tantalum, and molybdonum tailings to make a quick profit. Which is exactly what happened around the area shortly after World War II ended; it became popular to reenter the Dale Mining District to mine pilings, and in some cases mines were even reopened. So, at 80 years old, Sabathe was making plans to return to the Dale Mining District with the several partners he had rounded up, but before he could fulfill his final quest, he died on December 6, 1948 at the Palm Springs hospital; where he was recovering from a previous stroke. Following his death he was interned at the Hollywood cemetery.

As a eulogy to this great, but unknown, pioneer of Dale I, II, & III, Frank Sabathe is perhaps best remembered for never carrying a gun, and was a successful miner, although he was also a freight and passenger hauler who would go to great lengths to satisfy those he met. In truth, one such account said that Sabathe hauled a fig tree over 90 miles to satisfy a miner’s wife who only wanted something green at her shack in the desert.

Moreover, he did in fact travel to Blythe Junction (Rice), California, where he held the service contract for the California Southern Railroad for a short time. Frank Sabathe will always be warmly remembered as a French immigrant who made an important impact in No Man’s Land California.

Footnotes to the story of Frank Sabathe:

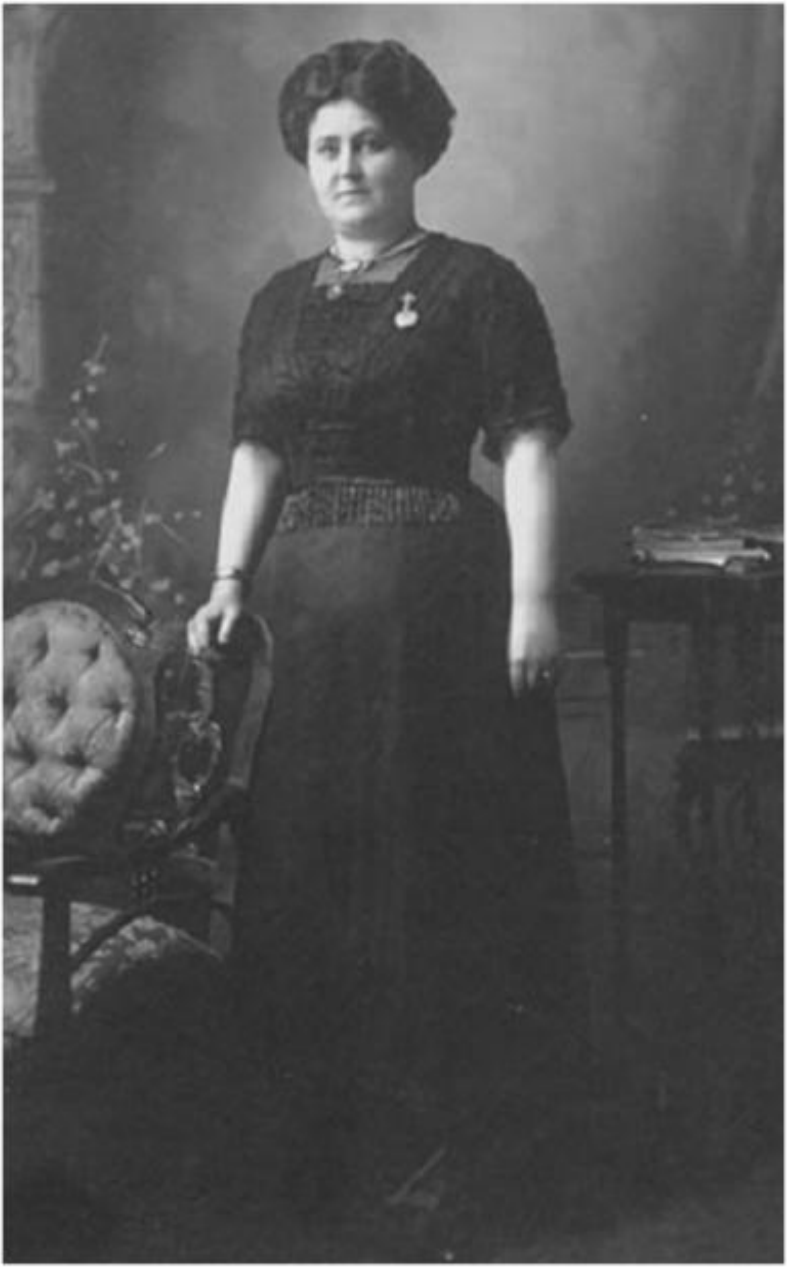
In April’s 1957 edition of *Desert Magazine*, Ronald D. Miller wrote an article entitled The Virginia Dale’s Two Forgotten Towns, where he mentioned Frank Sabathe, among other freight haulers,

> Various freight companies made regular supply runs to Dale. Their equipment usually consisted of 12 mules pulling a front and trailer wagon. One outfit established by Del Irvine and George Goodsell operated two single wagon six-mule units. These freighters traveled from Dale to the rail-

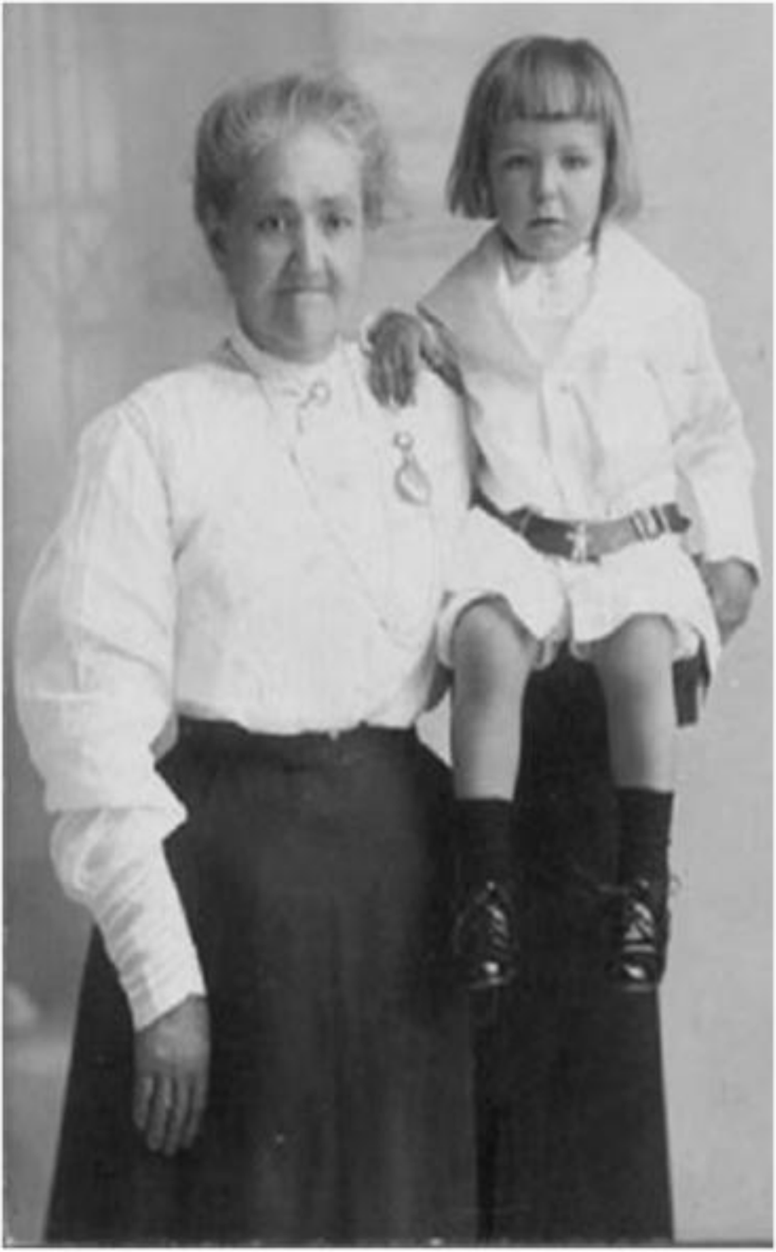
> road at Amboy with high grade ore and returned with coal for steam engines and machinery for the mines. Another route used for the shipping of supplies was the road from Banning to Dale. This was a two day trip with a stopover at Warren's Well in Yucca Valley.
>
> Frank Sabathe ran a stage line from Banning to Dale, and Sam Joyner, at one time the saloon keeper, ran the stage to Amboy. The Concord Coach was used in the early days. This vehicle rested on leather straps strung lengthwise from front to rear axle in lieu of springs. This saved the occupants from a merciless shaking on the bumpy desert roads. The coach seated six to eight people inside and in case of a full load there was room for one passenger beside the driver. The freight boot in the rear, the baggage rack on top and the mail pouch under the driver's seat were all covered with leather.

On June 3, 2006, approximately 40 volunteers from the local community cleaned up the old historic stage and freighting station ruins that Frank Sabathe presumably owned and operated. The site served as the primary stage and freight depot from Amboy to Dale I, II & III; most probably his company started sometime after Sabathe came to the area in 1892. And from a letter written by J.C. Allison on December 2, 1896, it is safely assumed he was transporting to Dale I before that period. The site would also become the home of a local legend, Judge Post. Dave and Anna Post lived in the depot, which was assumed to have been converted into a home. Dave “Judge” Post served as a peace officer in nearby Twentynine Palms, and played an important role in the 1943 Worth Bagley shooting incident.

Frank Marcelin Sabathe (Lisa Rieger photograph)



Jeanne Marie Sabathe (Lisa Rieger photograph)



Baby Dale with Grandmother Veronique, Circa 1907
(Lisa Rieger photograph)

Chapter 8

The Forgotten Town of Midland

Midland, California was once a small company owned mining town; however, today it is a ghost town of cement foundations, with nothing more than memories for the people who once lived and worked there. Midland was located about 22 miles northwest of Blythe, California, about midway between Rice (Blythe Junction) and Blythe.

Midland ruins

Officially, the U.S. Gypsum Company established the town of Midland in 1915; although, it was formerly known as Mineral City prior to being renamed Midland. Floyd Brown, the founder of Blythe Junction, and Jack Grey, had first discovered the gypsum location prior to selling their claim to U.S. Gypsum. The California Southern Railroad Company completed the Blythe Junction line in 1916, and by 1917 plans were being developed to lay track from Blythe Junction, through Midland to Blythe. This rail line would become the lifeline for the once prospering town, with virtually all products made in Midland being shipped out by rail; and because of a lack of large amounts of water available within Midland, the rail line transported some 250,000 gallons of water daily from Blythe to the town site by way of thirteen tank cars.

Starting about 1916, some 25 men were working and living in the town; however, World War I soon put expansion of the town site on hold until 1925, when about dozen men were employed in the development of the Maria Mountain gypsum deposit, which resulted in the placement of a 2,000 horsepower engine and a crusher. The first shipment of crushed gypsum left Midland in October of 1925 and by the end of the year over 4,700 tons had been sold; and as production increased, so too did the population. By 1928, a calcining plant was built, which allowed the company to produce plaster; and by 1933, a wallboard plant was added. Most interestingly, as one might expect, the town suffered from a lack of available housing, which forced many workers, at least initially, to live in tents.

Of further interest, Midland finally got a permanent Santa Fe Railroad station in 1935, which replaced a temporary boxcar. All about this same time, the town continued to expand employee housing and built several athletic fields and courts for those who sought physical activities, as well as a community center in 1937.

Midland ruins

In 1939 the U.S. Gypsum Company and Riverside County built a joint road together, bringing the first paved road to Midland. This paved road was essential to Midland’s growth, which soon saw the town grow to about 1,000 people. This boom led the company to expand the town’s full time housing, a school, and a commissary.

During World War II, the plant reached a wartime production level that saw employment reach 350 people, which would eventually become the largest producing gypsum company in the world; shipping products as far away as Australia.

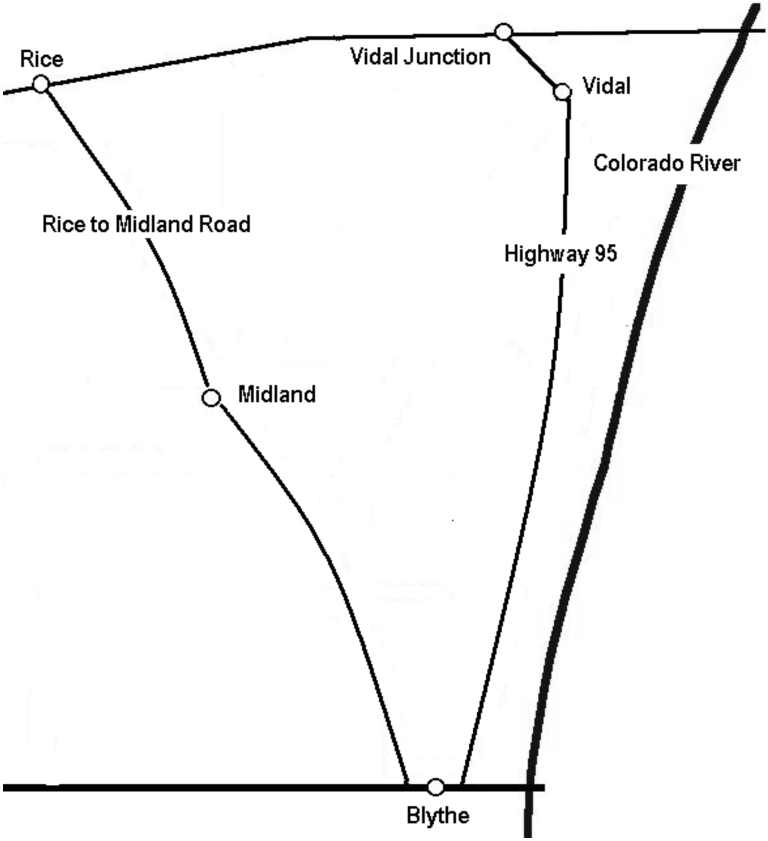
The war years (World War II) also witnessed General Patton’s army invade the town, when tanks rumbled through it, and snipers hid under the buildings; and on another occasion, employees were able to witness war games from the town site.

As mentioned previously, one of the biggest problems for the town of Midland was a lack of available water. There were, however, several small wells in the area, yet, none were sufficient for the towns growing needs. Consequently, an agreement was made between U.S. Gypsum and the city of Blythe to deliver water daily by rail in large tank cars. Midland had several massive storage tanks, which were filled by rail tank cars; and, from this location, the water was distributed throughout the town's homes and buildings and the plant. Eventually, the 200 plus family houses and company bunkhouse/cookhouse were improved upon when power was delivered by Southern California Edison, gas by Southern California Gas, and telephone service by the Colorado River Telephone Company. In time, the U.S. Gypsum Company upgraded the town with a sewage disposal plant, paved streets, tennis courts, a ball diamond, community hall, and a church. As a result of these improvements, Midland became a good place to live, with the average length of service lasting about ten years.

Midland ruins

Sadly, U.S. Gypsum Company closed its operation in Midland in 1966, which led to many of its buildings being sold; although many were simply abandoned. According to Floie Barrows, a local historian from Blythe, California, shortly after the U.S. Gypsum mine closed many of the houses were sold to people living in the Blythe area. Many of these homes became rental units and can still be seen in the city today. Interestingly, twenty-two buildings in Midland were, in time, used by the areas local fire departments seeking training experience for their personnel.

Of further interest, after the closure of the town, the Victor Mine gypsum shaft was used as a fallout shelter, which was initially set up and stocked by the Riverside County Disaster Preparedness Office; and later maintained by the Blythe Jeep Club. As a safe haven, the gypsum mine was utilized to stockpile food and water in case of an atomic bomb attack or natural disaster.



The shelter was initially developed to accommodate about 8,000 people for about three weeks; although once the Federal Government got involved this number was expanded to 25,000 people that might flee the metropolitan areas in the west. Supplies consisted of crackers, potable water in large round cans, the cans doubled as toilets after the water was consumed, and an army field hospital; although, due to vandalism, the mine was eventually demolished and bulldozed for public safety.

Intriguingly, decades later Barrows received a phone call advising him that for safety reasons the old mine was to be blasted shut; and he was asked to help dispose of some of the stored supplies. To his shock, he discovered he had been designated an assistant director for civil defense when the supplies had been placed in the mine originally. Somehow the government had a record that Barrows helped plan the placement of materials into the Midland mine, yet never told him about the project. In a written correspondence, dated August 4, 2007, Barrows stated,

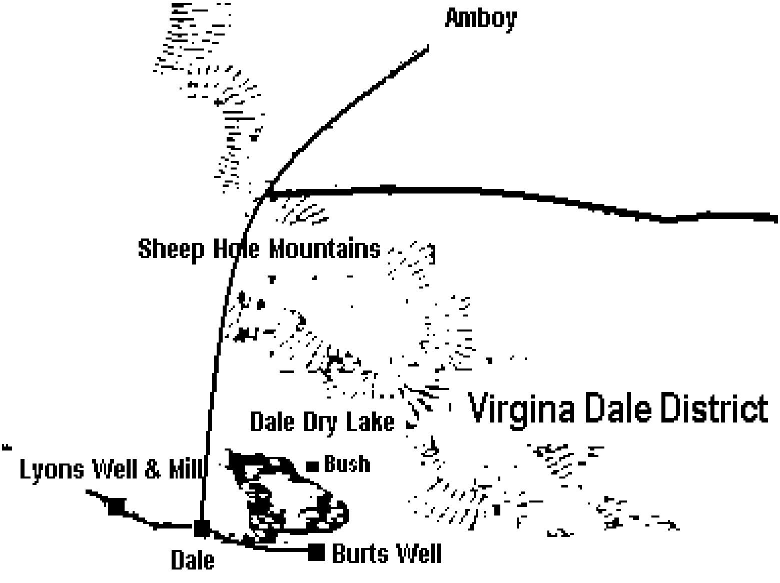
> To this day I've no recollection of either being assistant civil defense director or having anything to do with those supplies. They actually had to show me an old news article telling of my participation before I sort of accepted it. Anyway, I accompanied the crew that accessed the salvagability of the supplies and completed plans for blasting the mine shut. The crackers and water were still there, still edible and drinkable. We only salvaged parts of the field hospitable however, leaving the rest in the mine. The various entrances were blasted shut. We did not, however, destroy the airshafts into the mine.

A small number of Midland ruins linger today, with only a few visible partial walls and foundations remaining. Nevertheless, the old town site has become a popular seasonal RV campsite for many snowbirds visiting during the winter months, thereby keeping the area active.

Chapter 9

The Forgotten Town of Bush

According to David Durham, author of *Durham's Place Names of California's Desert Counties*, the town of Bush (San Bernardino County) was located 28 miles south of Amboy at Dale Dry Lake.


Amboy
Sheep Hole Mountains
Virgina Dale District
Dale Dry Lake
Bush
Lyons Well & Mill
Dale
Burts Well

Map showing location Burt's Well, Dale Lake, Bush and Dale, Circa 1896

Initially, the Dale Dry Lake area was of little importance to Anglos, that was until water was needed for mining operations in the surrounding mountains. Moreover, according to a Plat Map from an 1855-1856 survey there were no structures located in the area, which is about 40 miles west of Rice (Blythe Junction).

To add, Dale Dry Lake remained rangeland until the late 1800s, with the first recorded mine within the immediate area in 1873; although the Spanish worked the area well before it became part of the United States.

Concrete towers

To be more exact, near the northeastern edge of Dale Dry Lake there is a ten-acre location once known as the town of Bush, which has since been recorded as a California historic site. As of a 1986 survey, there were 17 mapped concrete slabs, which included portions of a chemical and salt mining operation. Two of the concrete slabs had partial adobe walls, and several others had cement blocks. The name of this historic town site appears to be named after Irvin Bush, who formed a chemical (alcohol) company there in 1920, which remained operational until 1949. In addition, the two adobe foundations and one well discovered were dated back to the early 1890s. The remaining cement slabs and the remains of a small pond are believed to be related to the chemical company; and additionally related to the company's operations there was an underground cement pipe that ran for about 2.5 miles toward the town of Amboy. Connected to this cement pipe is an exposed section of metal pipe that also runs about 0.5 miles. To learn more about Irvin Bush's company, please read Chapter 14, Patriarchs of Melody Knolls, which gives further details.

Ruins of a large concrete mixer

Old concrete tank holders

On the southwest side of Dale Dry Lake there is the forgotten town site of Dale I. As mentioned in previous chapters, Dale I was first founded about 1884 and was moved about ten miles to the south in 1903, followed by one more move in 1915. It can be hypothesized that the town site of Bush was operational sometime after Dale I was first established, to after its move in 1903; although, there is little information available to confirm this belief. We know that Irvin Bush started his company's operation in 1920; however, remains from the site have led to the belief that there was some sort of operation being conducted in the 1890s, prior to Irvin Bush. It is also known that roaming Indians often stopped and camped on the edge of Dale Dry Lake for perhaps centuries, primarily due to its seasonal water, especially after the area rained.

It is also common knowledge that the natural spring water around Dale Dry Lake lies just under the surface; and depending on the location, water can be found about 20 to 50 feet down. Although, it should also be mentioned the water is not very palatable, with high levels of salt and alkaline; but with few options for survival, it can be ingested.

Old foundation of a large building

It should also be mentioned that, at least initially, the primary water source for both Bush and Dale was "Burt's Well," which was named after John Burt who mined the Pinto Mountains to the south of Bush. As well, Dale Dry Lake was once known as Burt's Dry Lake before the Brooklyn Mining Company took control of the well in 1901; which was upgraded to a pumping station for mining operations in the mountains. Dale first moved south about 5 miles into the mountains sometime after 1903, followed by another move, to better accommodate the working miners. The town essentially moved as the gold vain moved, which left Bush to become the primary town on the basin floor.

Ruins of another building

One of the best available local accounts of Dale Dry Lake comes from William and Elizabeth Campbell, who both pioneered in Twentynine Palms in the 1930s, which lies about 20 miles to the west. The Campbell's were local weekend archeologists who archived many Indian artifacts around Twentynine Palms, including the town of Bush. During the 1930s, other archeologists also conducted research in the area, sometimes with the Campbell's, and other times without. In all, over 300 artifacts were archived from around Dale Dry Lake; of which were knives, arrows, darts, screws and drill tips. And most importantly, the significance of the Campbell's research is the proof that the lake was used by roving Indians well before Anglos arrived, with several different encampments near receding shorelines.

Later research also determined additional prehistoric campsites, in addition to the discoveries from the Campbell's of the 1930s. In fact, by 1986 two historic local and three additional sites were located. One site revealed bone fragments, projectile points, and shell fragments. One bone appeared to be human, another was a rabbit, and the shell appeared to be from a fresh water clam.

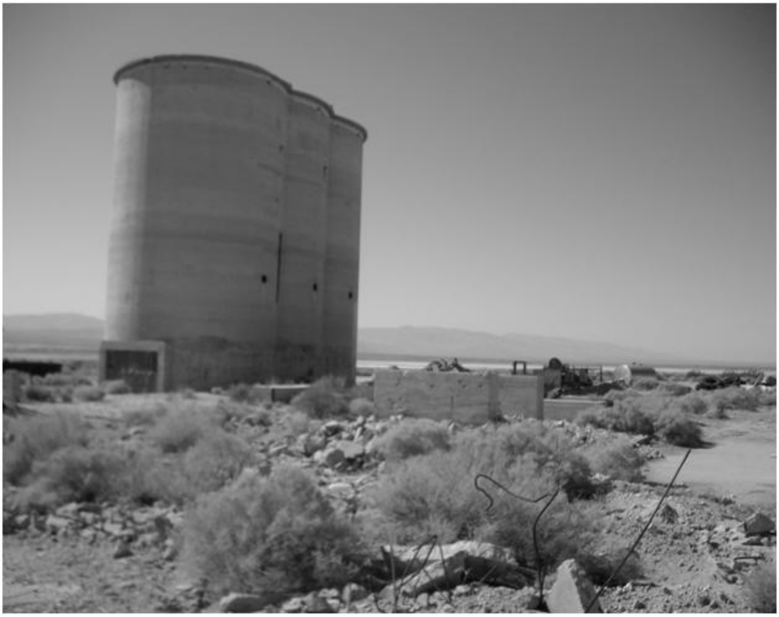
Additional walled ruins

Large concrete pads with some remaining equipment

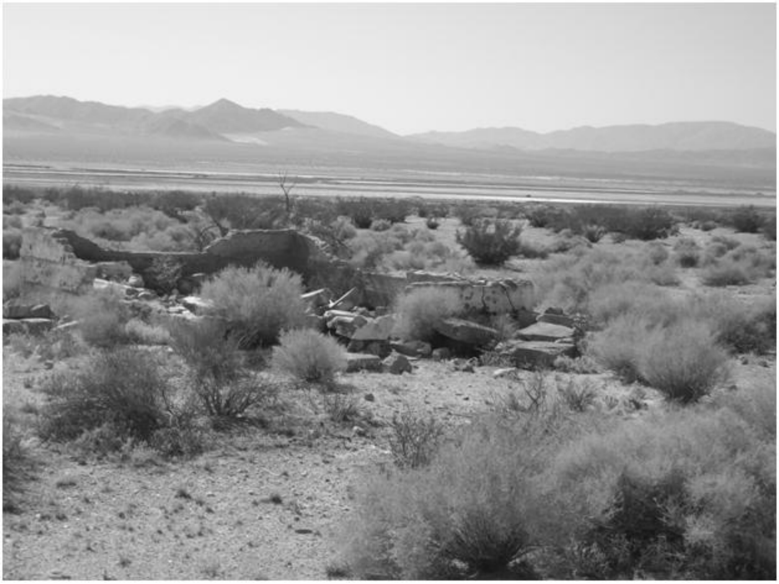
In conclusion, Dale Dry Lake was of importance to the Indians and Spanish long before Anglos arrived; for as long as there was water in the lake, it appeared humans, as well as wildlife used the life giving water on or just underneath the surface, which led to the short lived town of Bush.

Ruins of a possible septic tank

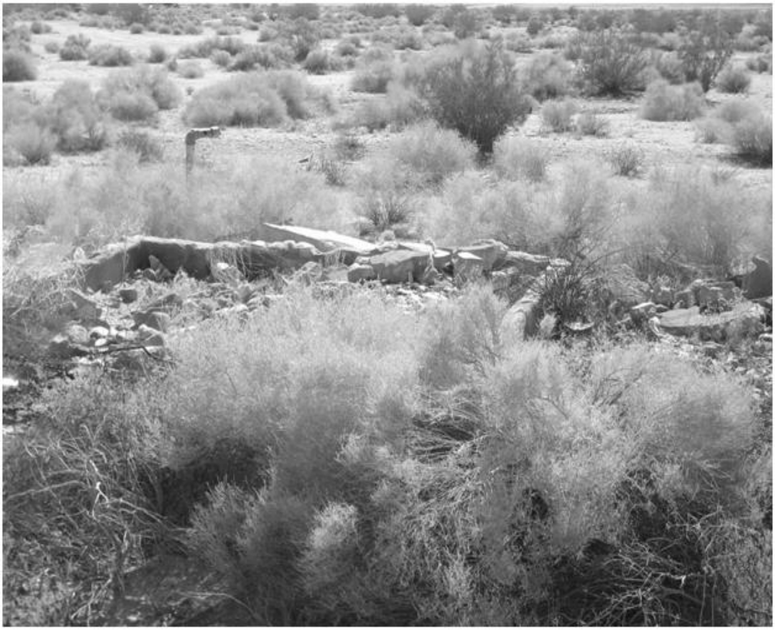
Old wall foundation for a large building



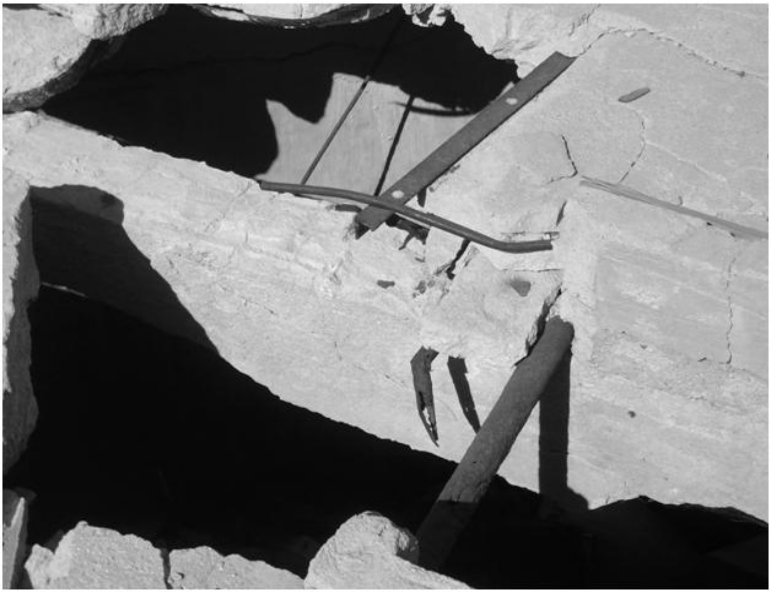
A view from above showing ruins
and Dale Dry Lake in the background



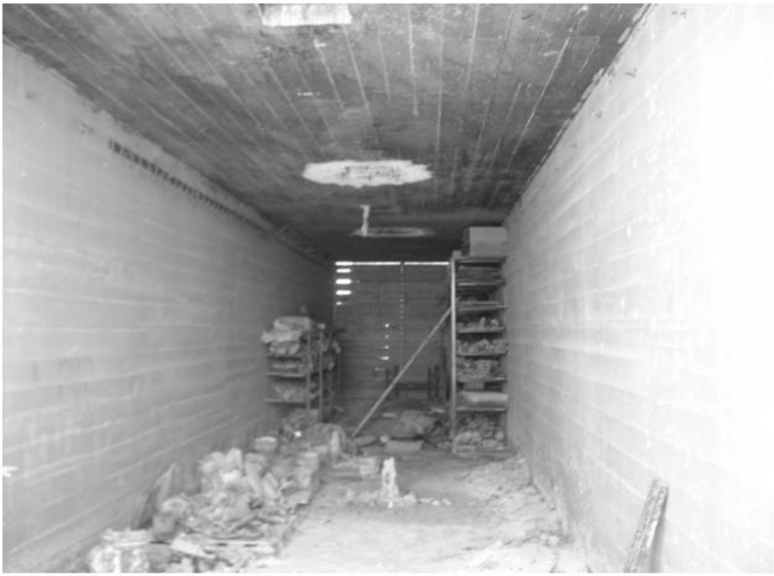
Brick ruins with view of Dale Dry Lake in the background



Concrete and rock ruins with pipe in the background



Septic tank under a concrete foundation



A view under the towers; large enough for a truck to drive through

Chapter 10

The Forgotten Town of Chubbuck

Like most mining operations around the Mohave Desert, towns often sprang up to better serve the people working and living there. And like most forgotten towns around Rice, once a mine ceased operations the town most often closed down. As such, Chubbuck, like so many others, also died when mining operations became unprofitable.

Concrete ruins in Chubbuck

About 1909, Charles Inglis Chubbuck and Mr. Harris established a building materials company, “Chubbuck and Harris,” in San Francisco; and starting shortly thereafter their business boomed and their partnership prospered.

After several failed quarry operations, Chubbuck and Harris collaborated with Union Carbide Corporation, a relationship that eventually lasted for over three decades. By 1921, Chubbuck and Harris expanded their operations when they purchased a 1,600-acre limestone mining claim along the Parker branch of the Santa Fe Railroad, which eventually became the town of Chubbuck.

Interestingly, Marcus Pluth and Tom Scofield located the original mining claim in the 1890s; and were also known for several discoveries in the Dale Mining District, including Eagle Mountain and Calico.

Starting in 1922, substantial construction took place along the town site of Chubbuck and its siding; and by 1925, it was a fully functional town with an operational processing facility. A one-mile long railroad line was additionally added to connect the processing plant near the town into the limestone quarries in the mountains.

The company owned two gasoline powered “dinky” locomotives, which hauled the limestone for processing; one of which would transport the ore only 600 feet to the crushing and screening plant. In time, the screening plant could produce five different-sized limestone products; after which all limestone sizes were then transported to the Chubbuck production plant, which was adjacent to the rail siding.

Cadiz Road; starting near Rice, through Chubbuck, to Cadiz

Of further interest, quicklime was always shipped in boxcars, only because if it was exposed to rain it could catch fire. Moreover, as part of its desire to maintain operations in the rural area, the Santa Fe Railroad Company gave the Chubbuck Limestone Company rock bottom shipping cost, which certainly helped the town site for several decades.

Furthermore, a diesel-powered plant in Chubbuck produced electricity for the town and for production operations. The town also boasted a company store, a post office, and a school. During its apex, there were about 40 buildings in Chubbuck, many of which were homes for the workers. There was even a landing strip where planes could land.

The school was on the west side of town and opened in 1932, and was taught by Mrs. Willa Riddle, who remained until 1936; and was replaced by Mrs. Sibyl Poyner, who remained until 1941; followed again by Mrs. Mabel Conner until 1950 when it closed. The local school normally enrolled no more than 40 students.

The superintendent of Chubbuck Limestone Company in Chubbuck in 1943 was Vernon Dick, who lived on the west side of town, away from the workers quarters. The Chubbuck post office was not established until 1938, which was housed in the company owned store. Water was shipped in from Cadiz on Santa Fe tank cars; and the labor force was primarily made up of Mexicans who earned 25 to 30 cents an hour. Workers were supplied living quarters, which was complete with water and electricity. When working the quarry, the workers traveled by truck to the site because they were not allowed to ride the rail.

The Chubbuck Limestone Company participated in the construction of the Colorado River Aqueduct between 1937 and 1938; whereby it produced a white-reflecting lime coating that was used for curing the concrete and as a reflective coating to reflect heat from the aqueduct. Without the Chubbuck lime coating, temperatures could have risen some 40 degrees higher, making the curing much more difficult.

The company would eventually use the whitening technology to manufacture a product named “Snow White,” which was very popular with homes in the desert areas well into the 1970s; it also developed several other successful products, among them was a product named “Cal,” which was used as an accelerant for cement and stucco.

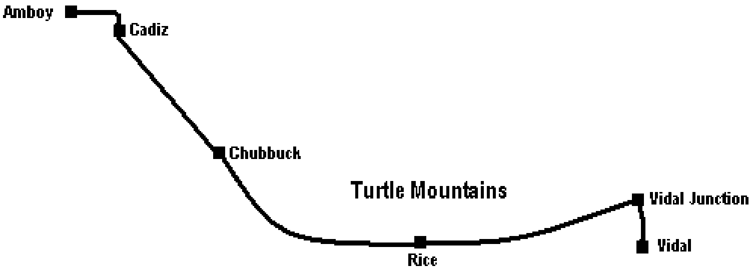
Sadly, the company eventually succumbed to competition, which forced it to cut production by 1948; forcing the mine to run intermittently until 1951, when it ceased operations forever.

More concrete ruins in Chubbuck

The Harms Brothers Construction Company of Sacramento purchased the property and equipment from the Reconstruction Finance Company (RFC) in 1951 after the Chubbuck Limestone Company had discontinued payments on a loan taken out in the 1930s for $100,000.

The school and post office were closed in 1950, but a few workers remained in Chubbuck in the hopes the new owners would open the operation again. An auction took place in 1954, where much of the equipment was sold.

A 1955 U.S Geological Survey map from the area did not show a railroad to the quarry, yet many of the homes could still be seen from an aerial photograph. The Chubbuck siding was removed by 1976, when the Santa Fe railroad re-laid the Parker Branch.



A private house was built in 1975 on the foundation of the lime production plant; however by 1977 it also did not exist, due to a fire; believed to be arson. There is only one remaining structure in the once thriving Chubbuck town today, which is the ruin of a concrete explosive building about six to eight feet in diameter.

Unfortunately, the remains of the town were bulldozed and are still piled about the area; some of the railroad ties used for the quarry railroad can still be seen and the crushed limestone roadbed remains, although it is slowly eroding.

Chapter 11

Bizarre Dole Air Race of 1927: Includes Amboy Landing by Lieutenants Al Henley and Bennett Griffin

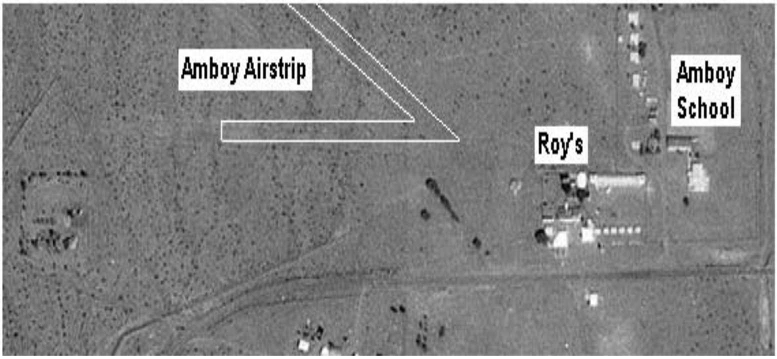
The now legendary Dole Air Race is yet another important inclusion into the story of No Man's land California. In short, in 1927, Lieutenants Al Henley and Bennett Griffin, both from Oklahoma, were forced to land their plane in Amboy, California. It seems obvious today that Henley and Griffin took the unusual route across the western section of No Man's Land as part of their travels to San Francisco, which has since brought to light the flight they had undertaken as part of their preparation for perhaps one of the years greatest races.

Al Henley
Bennett Griffin

The Dole Air Race was inspired by Charles Lindbergh's May 20, 1927 successful trans-Atlantic flight; and sponsored by James Dole the legendary Hawaiian pineapple magnet; with a first place prize of $25,000 and a second place prize of $10,000. The principle aim of the contest was to establish the first fixed-wing airplane flight between Oakland and Honolulu, an estimated 2,400-mile trip. And Dole, who was a member of the National Aeronautical Association, was also hopeful he could entice "Lucky Lindy" into the race by offering the large award. The build up to the race started well before August 16, with 15 entries and the excitement of the nation.

Not to be outdone, Hollywood Theater tycoon Sid Grauman upped Dole's award with a $30,000 prize to whoever flew first from Los Angeles to Tokyo; and immediately following Grauman's proposal, San Francisco Citizen's Flight Committee made immediate plans to extend the Dole Air Race all the way to Australia, which bumped the purse up to $50,000.

Here is the final list of the pilots initially selected to participate,



Aerial view of Amboy and adjacent airstrip

William Erwin, an American ace during World War I, shot down nine German planes. Erwin walked with a limp he received pegging a gopher hole years earlier. His plane was a green and silver Swallow monoplane called Dallas Spirit, which he planned on using to win the $25,000 prize money put up by Dallas broker William Easterwood, for a flight from Dallas to Hong Kong in less than 300 hours; with no more than three stops. The Dole Air Race was one of the legs. Irwin's wife, Connie, had been scheduled to be the navigator; however, after her pregnancy was discovered she was disqualified.

Maj. Livingston Irving, another World War I ace, flew his dazzling orange and black Breese monoplane called the Pacific Pabco Flyer. Irving's father was the mayor of Berkeley, and Irving worked for the Pacific Paraffin Paint Company, which sponsored the plane; in fact, company employees also contributed toward the purchase of the plane. Irving qualified as his own navigator.

Arthur Goebel was renowned for his ability to fly upside down as effortlessly as right side up. Phillips Petroleum sponsored Goebel, who flew the Woolaroc, which was a yellow and blue Travelair plane.

John Frost flew his polished new Lockheed Vega called Golden Eagle, which was paid for by San Francisco Examiner publisher George Hearst, son of William Randolph

Hearst. The plane boasted gold and blue landing gear, which really stood out among the contestants.

Amboy Airstrip and an adjacent hanger

Martin Jensen, who hailed from Honolulu, flew a Breese monoplane called the Aloha. The plane was new and was purchased after another buyer failed to make final payment. Friends around Hawaii helped raise enough money to pay for the plane, so a grateful Jensen painted a gigantic lei running entirely around the plane's nose, and the Hawaiian Islands seal was placed on both sides.

Capt. Arthur Rogers, a British World War I ace with 32 German kills, flew the speedy Angel of Los Angeles, designed by Leland Bryant – his navigator.

Capt. Frederick Giles, another British World War I ace from Detroit, flew the Hess Bluebird biplane.

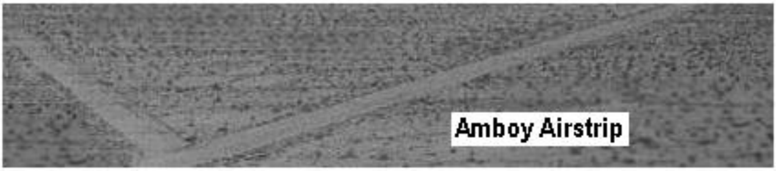
Navy lieutenants George Covell and Richard Waggener flew a Tremaine Humming Bird that they renamed The Spirit of John Rodgers.

James Giffin flew a two-engine International Triplane called the Spirit of Los Angeles, which was sponsored by Hoot Gibson, a cowboy star, who had his smiling face painted on the plane.

Bennett Griffin piloted the Travelair monoplane Oklahoma, which was identical to the Woolaroc, and was steered by Al Haney.

Lt. Norman Goddard flew the gleaming silver El Encanto that he designed. Goddard claimed the letters "HBH" painted on the rudder stood for "Hell Bent for Hawaii."

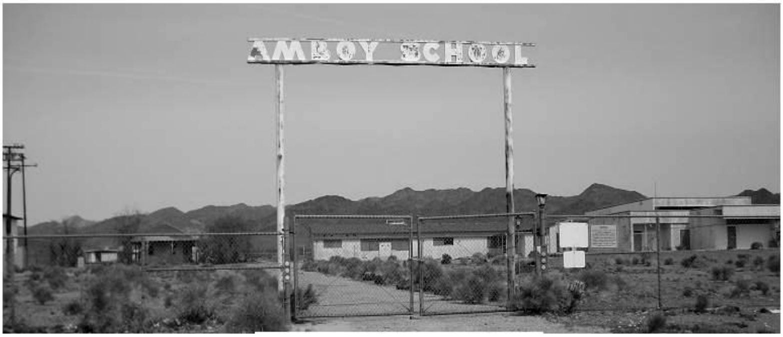
John Pedlar and his young mascot, a schoolteacher named Mildred Doran, flew a red, white and blue Buhl Airsedan biplane called, as one might expect, Miss Doran.



Old Amboy airplane hangar:
designed for a large single engine prop airplane

Before the big event, *Fort Author News* reported on Friday August 5, 1927 that several of the contestants were having bizarre, if not just plain bad luck. A few entrants in the upcoming $35,000 Dole Air Race, from San Francisco to Honolulu, were running their preliminary stages when they encountered problems. Lieutenants Al

Henley and Bennett Griffin of the U.S Army Air Corps, who were flying from Bartlesville, Oklahoma to San Francisco, California, were forced down in Amboy, California because of mechanical problems that led to a lack of fuel. Lieutenants George Covell and L.P Paliktowki of the U.S. Navy, who were flying from San Diego to Los Angeles, were also forced down in Santa Ana. Finally, Major Livingston Irving, from Berkeley, California, was forced down near Monterey. All three planes intended to complete their initial flights and arrive in San Francisco in time to start the race.



Abandoned Amboy school

UNITED STATES
POST OFFICE
AMBOY CALIFORNIA
92304

Amboy Post Office

To make this story even stranger, the initial goal of the contest had already been established a few weeks earlier by U.S. Army Lieutenants Lester Maitland and Albert Hegenberger, who flew their three-engine Fokker military aircraft from Oakland Airport to Wheeler Army Airfield on Oahu Island Hawaii in 25 hours and 50 minutes. Then again, on July 14 Ernie Smith and Emory Bronte departed from Oakland, California in a small civilian monoplane. Upon running out of fuel 26 hours and 36 minutes later, the small plane crash-landed in a thorn tree on Molokai Island, Hawaii. Dole barred both of these efforts because neither landed in Honolulu as the contest rules specified.

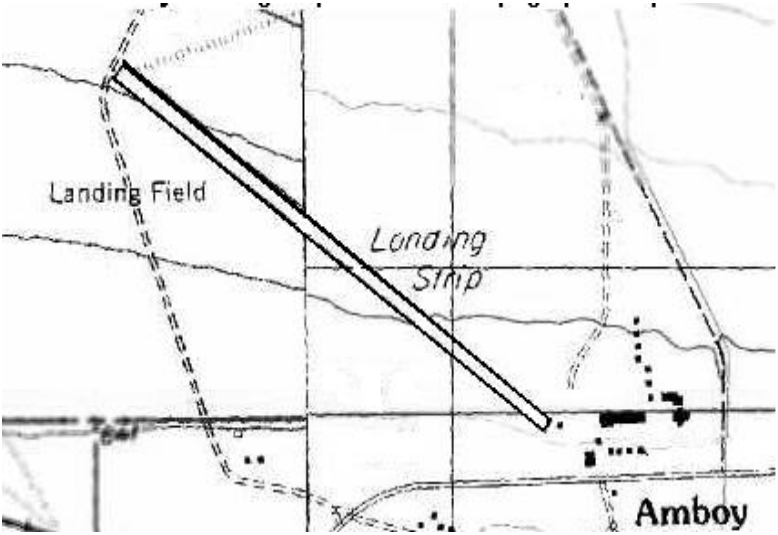
Amboy Church

Events continued to get even creepier shortly after the official starting-position drawing, which was held on August 8 at the National Aeronautics Association, in the Matson Building in San Francisco, at C.W Saunders office.

Within two days, U.S. Navy Lieutenants George Covell and R. S. Waggener took off from San Diego and on their way to Oakland they flew into a fog bank and crashed into an ocean cliff; both men perished.

The following day a lone pilot, Arthur Rogers, took off for a test flight at Western Air Express Field in Montebello, California. After circling for a while, the plane attempted to land and without warning, it nose dived into the ground.

The troubled air race continued to be overwhelmed by unusual problems. Mildred Doran, Auggy Pedlar, and Vilas Knobe who were all flying into Oakland, developed engine trouble, but successfully landed in a wheat field in the San Joaquin Valley. The group had no tools, which had been dropped off in Long Beach because they were cluttering the plane. Then again, on August 11 J. L. Giffin and Theodore Lundgren, on approach into Oakland, crashed into the San Francisco Bay; the two men were unhurt.



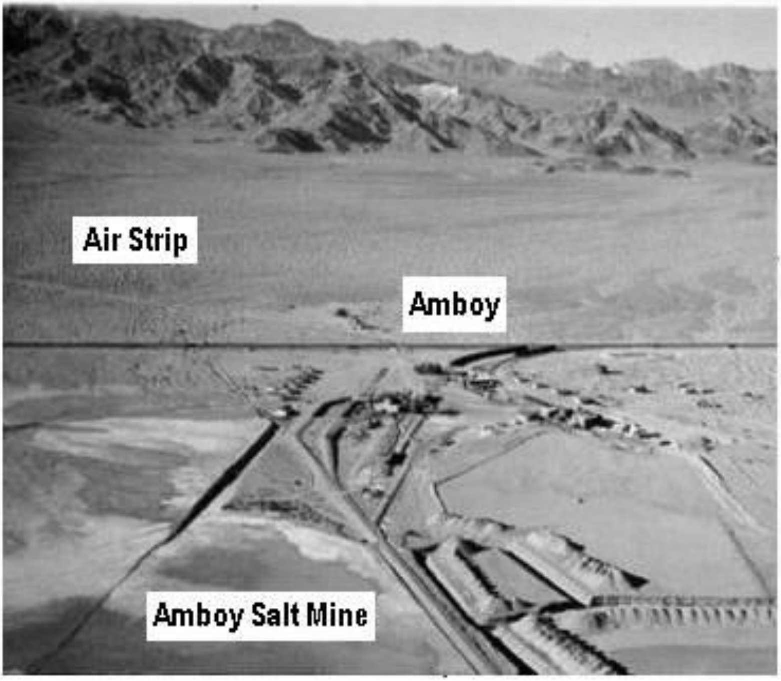
Amboy landing strip: 1984 USGS topographic map

These prior encounters left the starting lineup without eight men, who were previously selected for the contest. Out of the original lineup, the following planes and crew members were ready for the August 16 race.

> Golden Eagle, a Lockheed monoplane flown by Jack Frost and navigated by Gordon Scott
>
> Aloha, a monoplane flown by Martin Jensen and navigated by Paul Schluter
>
> Woolaroc, flown by Art Goebel and navigated by William Davis
>
> Miss Doran, flown by Auggy Pedlar, navigated by Vilas Knobe, and carrying Mildred Doran
>
> Oklahoma, the sister ship of Woolaroc, piloted by Bennett Griffin and navigated by Al Henley
>
> Dallas Spirit, flown by William Erwin and navigated by Alvin Eichwaldt

El Encanto, a metal monoplane flown by Norman Goddard and Kenneth Hawkins, which was heavily favored with pre-race odds makers

Pabco Flyer, flown alone by Livingston Irving



On race day, a projected 100,000 inquisitive Californians were present in Oakland to watch this legendary air race. Two of the original 12 planes had already crashed, with three men dying; and two planes were ruled unsafe.

The format for the Dole Air Race was rather simple – the entrants were to takeoff from Oakland within minutes of each other and the first airplane and crew to land in Honolulu were to be the winner.
Several of the initial take offs were also plagued with uncanny difficulties. Shortly after 12:00 noon, the Oklahoma took off, but had to abort the flight over San Francisco; this was the same plane and crew forced down in Amboy only ten days earlier. The El Encanto and the Pabco Flyer both crashed while taking off. Miss Doran successfully took off, but quickly circled back, landing about ten

minutes later before taking off again later. The Dallas Spirit also had to return to Oakland after taking off.

CAFE
347
373
335
ROY'S
VACANCY
MOTEL
CAFE

Roy's Motel and Restaurant

ROY'S
VACANCY
MOTEL
CAFE

Old Highway Patrol Unit on Display in Front of Roy's

After the race began, the ship Wilhemina and the motorship Silver Fir saw the Aloha, and a Navy destroyer witnessed the Miss Doran pass nearby. A Matson Line ship also heard two planes overhead in close proximity at about 2:15 am, likely the Woolaroc and the Aloha.

An estimated 20,000 celebrating people gathered at Wheeler Airfield in Honolulu the next day. Several Bands were playing, people were waving flags, and bottles of prohibited alcohol were openly used. The reviewing stands were full of important dignitaries like Gov. Wallace Farrington and James Dole. Most everyone in the area were at the airfield except the some 3,500 Dole company employees, who were forced to work that day; possibly an important omen.

At 12:20 p.m., the first flyer landed and taxied up to the reviewing stand. Marguerite Jensen almost became the newest casualty when she ran up to the plane before the propeller stopped. If it were not for the good judgment of a police officer who quickly grabbed her, the blade surely would have killed the woman; another frightful forecast of things to come.

Art Goebel eagerly exited the Woolaroc and said, "Say folks, it's great to be here." Army officers slapped him on his back, while the mechanical noise of the airplane engine and skyrockets covered much of the conversation. Davis, the navigator also jumped out of the plane, touting his blue Navy uniform.

Marguerite Jensen clutched Goebel and quickly kissed him; afterwards she said "God bless you! Oh, can you tell me something about Martin?" She insisted. "Is he still in the air? Where do you think he can be?" A terrifying look was seen upon her face. After Goebel said he saw nothing along the way, Mrs. Jensen fell down and began to sob, after which two Army officers escorted her away from the celebration. About two hours later, the jubilant crowd could be heard cheering when Jensen’s plane was sited, a relieved and excited moment for all Hawaiians, who knew him or knew of him.

The Woolaroc won the race in 26 hours, 17 minutes, earning Goebel and Davis the $25,000 first place prize. The Aloha arrived in 28 hours, 16 minutes, earning Jensen and Schluter the second place prize of $10,000. The jubilant crowd, which cheered for the Woolaroc and Aloha, soon turned somber when no other planes arrived and it was realized they might be lost somewhere in the Pacific Ocean.

Here is where the story gets even more bizarre, neither the Golden Eagle nor the Miss Doran or their crewmembers, Jack Frost – Gordon Scott, and Auggy Pedlar –Vilas Knobe – Mildred Doran were ever seen of again. The Miss Doran, from Michigan, was named for one of its crewmembers, Mildred Doran – the beautiful young schoolteacher went along as the third member of the plane's crew. She was the only woman participating in the race.

Just two of the original twelve aircraft that made the final cut for the Dole Air Race actually arrived on Honolulu Island.

Many people today may remember the search for Amelia Earhart in 1937; however, few know that an even larger search took place ten years earlier. For the initial two planes lost in the Pacific Ocean, followed by a third soon after, more than 70 navy and merchant ships and 120 small vessels from the Japanese Sampan Association looked for any signs of the lost crews. Three submarines, the USS R-8 (SS-85), USS S-42 (SS-153), and S-46 (SS-157) immediately conducted a search, but found nothing. The armada only gave up after it was realized that no one could still be alive.

To make the story even eerier, after the plane Dallas Spirit was repaired back in Oakland, Erwin and Eichwaldt joined the search. John Erwin was a World War I ace who was seeking to be first to fly from Dallas to Hong Kong, and win the $25,000 prize posted by a Texas Millionaire. With the blessing of naval authorities, Erwin and his navigator-radio man attempted the trip again in the hope of finding those lost. Roughly 600 miles into their travels, a frantic broadcast was sent stating the plane was in a tailspin toward the ocean below. The Dallas Spirit and its crew were also never seen again.

While the search continued, both surviving crews were interviewed in a hope to learn some details that might help the search; however, little new information was discovered. The Woolaroc flew high and encountered no problems, yet the Aloha flew low, hitting a wave at one point and had some problems with their fuel and lubricating systems. Interestingly, the Woolaroc had several hours of fuel remaining and the Aloha had less than an hour of fuel, which suggested the Aloha had been lucky.

Authorities also considered the lost planes might have over shot the Hawaiian Islands, so the search was expanded to cover an area to the east. In addition, rumors of flare sightings in some remote parts of Hawaii, initiated a search of the islands as well.

After three weeks of patrolling, the massive search was discontinued. Admiral Jackson stated 54 Battle Fleet ships had participated in the 350,000 square mile search between August 17 and September 5. Other authorities would eventually claim that over 550,000 square miles were actually covered; with Navy and Merchant fleets, private ships and aircraft included.

Some have suggested that the Dole Air Race was perhaps hurriedly planned; however, race organizers took every safety measure available at the time to ensure the planes and flyers were worthy and experienced enough to fly. Before it was over, ten people died, and a major portion of the Pacific Fleet, as well as a number of merchant ships were tied up for several weeks hunting the missing planes and flyers.

It is all too easy to blame the organizers for each of the individual incidents that occurred, many of which happened on different days, in different locations, and by different aircraft and crews.

Another important component was the direct involvement of the United States Department of Commerce, which had just added their Aeronautics Bureau, and was cooperating with race organizers. The Aeronautics Bureau inspected all aircraft that had been nominated; as well, they examined pilots and navigators for competence before giving final approval. Requirements included a 90-mile per hour speed, a fuel capacity of 300 gallons, a reserve of at least 15%, and a flying distance of 2,400 miles – even though the distance between locations was about 2,100 nautical miles. The flight was assumed to be approximately 27 hours, a little shorter than Lindbergh’s 33 hours; yet still an exhausting period.

The U.S. Navy also agreed to cooperate by stationing destroyers at intervals between San Francisco and Honolulu. It also had the aircraft carrier Langley and the tender Aroostock standing by; additionally, numerous surface ships and submarines were patrolling the perimeter.

The government also made arrangements with ships sailing between the islands and the mainland, and likewise gave information to the pilots about the ships they might encounter. In addition, several Matson and Dollar liners, and other private surface ships were notified of the race and to keep an eye out for the planes.

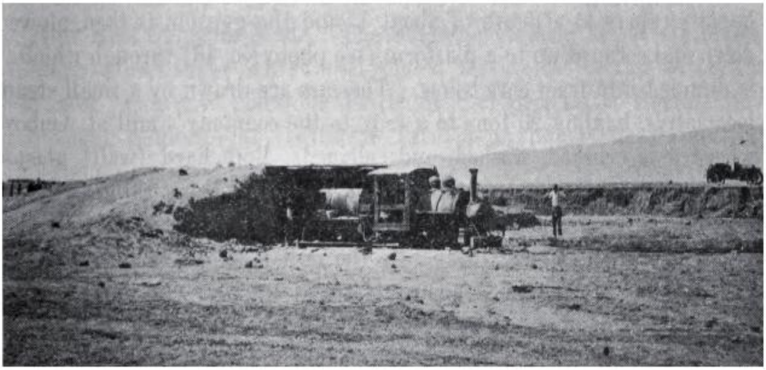
Of course, this strange chronicle could be easily rejected, as perhaps the fault of early aviation; yet, there is more. The *Kingsport Times* reported Al Henley died Friday January 25, 1929 in an airplane crash, along with two other people. Henley, perhaps one of the most experienced aviators in the world in 1929, died when his plane took a nosedive about 100' from the ground. Moreover, the man who perhaps started this craze, Charles Lindbergh, experienced an eerie nightmare as well. On March 1, 1932, Charles Lindbergh's 20-month-old child was abducted and found dead on May 12.

Moreover, Bruno Hauptmann was eventually found guilty; and up to the end of his life he maintained his innocence. Interestingly, he was executed on April 3, 1936 for a crime he might not have committed. Amelia Earhart would also use the now historic Wheeler Airfield for her legendary January 11, 1935 solo flight to the mainland, only to come up missing July 2, 1937, while trying to circumnavigate the world; never to be seen again. Wheeler Airfield also became the site of two Japanese bombing attacks, killing thirty-three men, which led to United States entry into World War II. And finally, the sponsor of the air race, James Dole, never suffered financially, but the circumstances surrounding his legendary air race mentally broke him.

In hindsight, several of the planes should not have taken the trip. However, with luck being an element for those who survived, another option should have been considered before flying. Just before the race, Martin Jensen decided to christen his monoplane Aloha for good luck. The ceremony highlighted ragtime music from Dave Kane's "Harmony Trio" and Oakland beauty queen Ruby Smith broke a bottle of Champaign across the Aloha. Some have suggested the Aloha and her crew were one of the underdogs in the race. By Jensen unusually christening his plane before his flight, he proved that perhaps luck and respect for a plane was needed most of all.

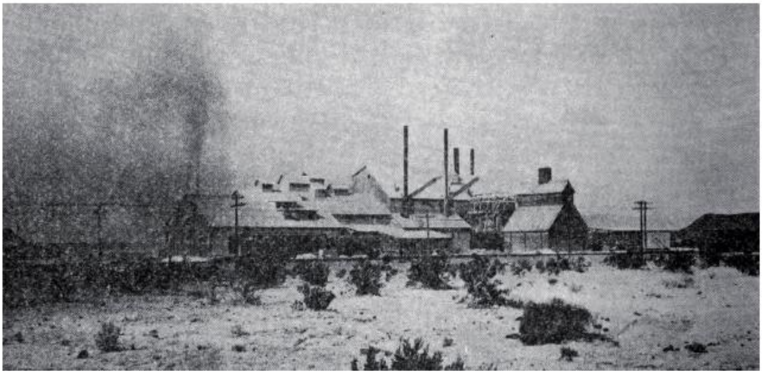
The Bizarre Dole Air Race of 1927, and its unusual landing by the crew of the Oklahoma, Lieutenants Al Henley and Bennett Griffin, in Amboy, certainly brought the full story to light. Amboy played only a minor role in this chronicle, its existence being the sole component; and like many lost communities and people in and around No Man's Land California, the story must be retold for the region to be truly appreciated today.

Assorted Amboy Photographs



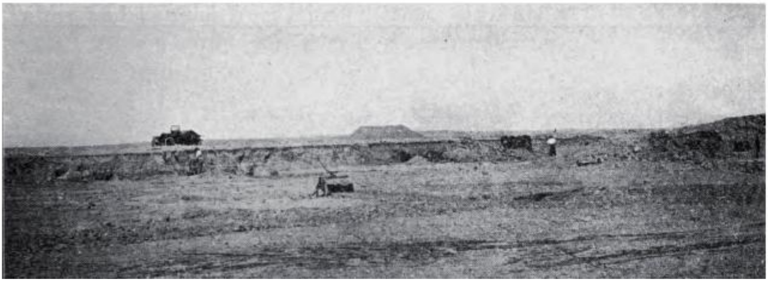
A 1916 photo of gypsum mining with plow and scraper at dry lake deposits near Amboy

1916 photo of Pacific Consolidated Cement Plaster Company at Amboy



1916 photo of Pacific Consolidated Cement Plaster Company at Amboy

1920 photo of men working in a salt deposit at the Pacific Rock Salt Company near Amboy

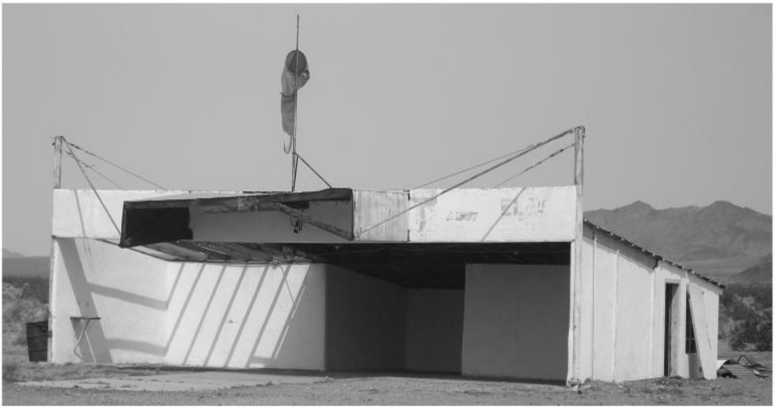


1916 photo of the Consumers Salt Company at Saltus, 3 miles east of Amboy

Side view of Amboy airstrip

Abandoned housing behind Amboy school

Amboy chloride dry fields



Old Amboy hangar

Two rooms in the rear of the old Amboy hangar

Abandoned house behind Amboy school

Old water tank tower and utility building

Amboy chloride wet fields

12121 AMBOY RD.
HOME OF
NATIONAL
CHLORIDE CO.
OF AMERICA
P.O.BOX 26 • AMBOY, CA 92304

Rear view of old Amboy hangar

Part of an old loading ramp

Amboy loading ramp near ruins of Amboy railroad station and yard

Amboy water tower, near old airstrip, next to possible air-tower

CAFE
AIR COOLED
FOUNTAIN
ICE

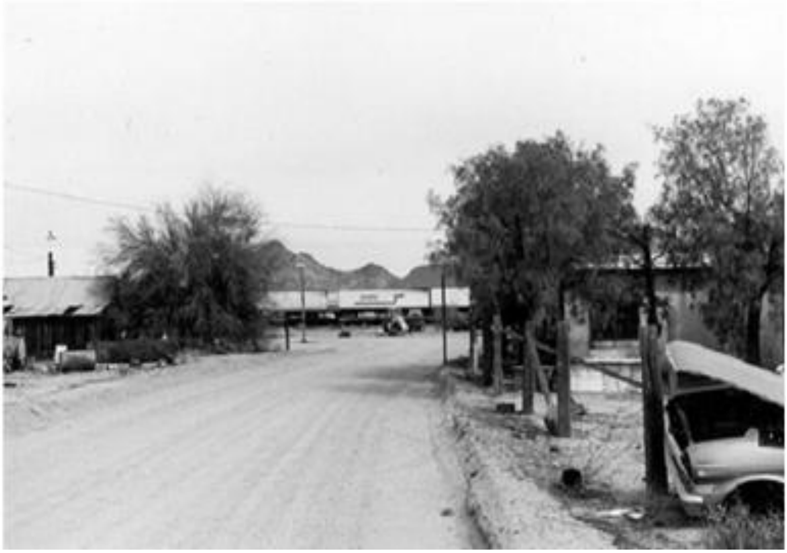
Amboy postcard, circa 1940

Amboy crater

Chapter 12

Youthful Days in Rice

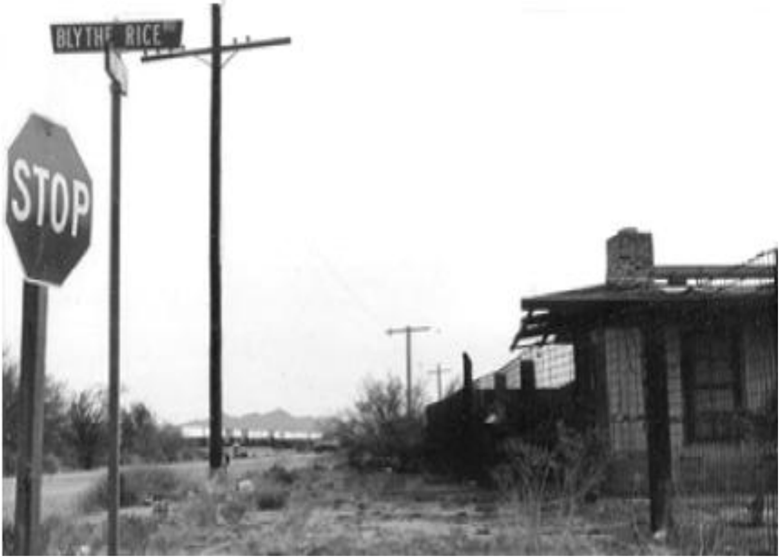
The town of Rice is but a memory for those who once lived there. Rice is now a ghost town with a story that needs to be recorded. The Eloise Marlowe Story is perhaps the first written account of what life was like during the great depression in Rice. Like many forgotten towns in the area, known as No Man's Land California, the desert always takes back what man constructs when it is left alone too long.



Rice, circa 1990 (Chris Barrus photograph)

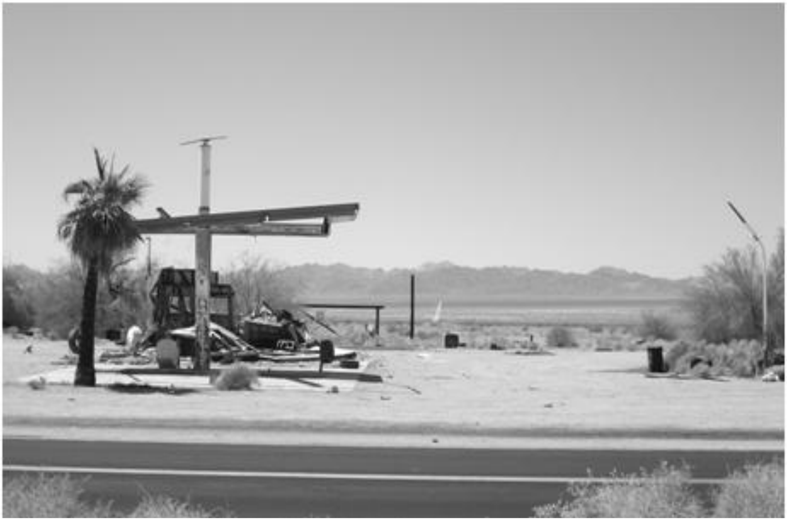
Eloise Marlowe was interviewed on Monday August 13, 2007 at the family farm just outside of Blythe California. At that time, Eloise was an eighty-year old woman who demonstrated a mental sharpness most people would be envious to have. Her memories were acute and went beyond expectations. Based on personal observations during the interview, it is believed her account was accurate. In fact, several of her descriptions were substantiated by separate first hand observations of the ruins before and after her interview.

Eloise Marlow was born October 11, 1926 in Los Angles California at St. Vincent Hospital. Eloise first went to Rice in March of 1935 and left in July 1937. Her two-year stay in Rice was referred to fondly during the interview, however when she lived there as a child she could not wait to leave. When she left Rice at age eleven, she warmheartedly remembered that she had "asked God not to return."



Rice, circa 1990 (Chris Barrus photograph)

Rice, circa 1990 (Chris Barrus photograph)



Ruins of the Rice Union 76 gas station and the Floyd Brown road to Midland in the background in 2008

Atkins Posey, Eloise's father, had worked for the Jahn Bassie Company since 1929. The company had a contract to work on the Colorado River Aqueduct that was constructed adjacent to Rice. Atkins was considered an important skilled concrete laborer, who worked on the siphoning tunnels within the aqueduct. When Atkins started working in Rice, he was earning a substantial $4.00 a day, and before he left Rice in 1937, he was earning even more – a whopping $7.00 a day. During the depression era of the 1930s, this was considered a substantial amount of money.

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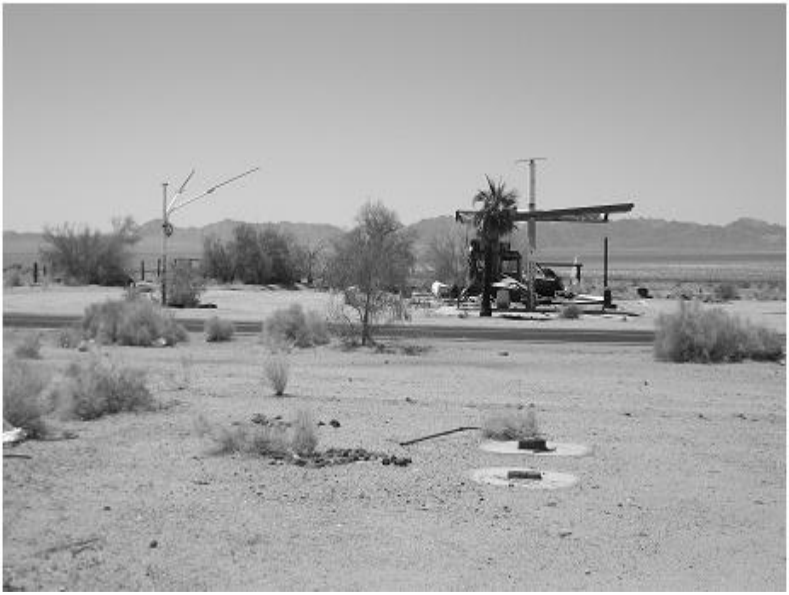
The family toiled together in the harsh desert climate of Rice. Atkins worked full-time for the Jahn Bassie Company in Rice until July 1937, but took work from the company off and on until the end of

World War II. Whenever the company received a new contract, they would call Atkins first. These calls often led the family to some obscure locations in the United States and Mexico. Shortly after the family left Rice in 1937, they moved to Blythe California. Atkins eventually left the company permanently in 1946, due to what he considered unreasonable Union demands.



Ruins of Rice Union 76 gas station, surrounded by numerous concrete slabs, where homes and businesses once prospered

Atkins was a forward thinking man. Atkins, along with his wife Gladis, created a financial plan for the family; and Rice became instrumental towards their goal of buying a farm someday. Atkins purchased 300 acres of accretion land around Blythe from the Palo Verde Irrigation District for $600.00. In spite of an economic depression across the United States, the family was able to save enough money to capitalize on this nations despair. This investment would continue to pay dividends for the family well into the future. Shortly after the acquisition of 300 acres ($2.00 an acre), Atkins sold a section to the City of Blythe for a substantial profit. In 1946, Atkins again sold a section of the family farm to the Gas Company for $12,000. The money earned toiling in Rice allowed the family to enjoy a standard of living only imaginable ten years earlier. The daughter and grandchildren of Atkins still reside and work a sizable section of the original family farm that was first acquired back in 1937.

Eloise Marlowe, the daughter of Atkins Posey, remembers clearly what her father said upon selling sections of the family farm, "I will sell everything I have, but my wife and daughter." When talking about her parents, Eloise fondly stated that she was "Very proud of them" and that they were "Two wonderful people and great providers."

Gladis Posey, wife of Atkins and mother to Eloise, believed that a good wife should go wherever her husband worked. Gladis loved Atkins very much and wanted to make a decent home for him, even if it meant living in the middle of No Man's Land California. Gladis, along with Eloise, made a comfortable home for Atkins in the isolated desert town of Rice. Atkins often worked outside of town, but made it back to his family each evening. Gladis had always been a homemaker and took great pride in her family role; as such, Rice would create many opportunities for Gladis to prove her worth to her family. Life was not easy in Rice; in fact, there were various peculiarities unique to this fleeting town.

Old road to Twentynine Palms; runs next to Highway 62 today

Rice, formally known as Blythe Junction, had risen and descended several times in its existence. The period that the aqueduct was being built was only one of several expansion stages. Normally these build ups would last only a few short years and would be followed by a quick decline. From its initial development starting perhaps in 1909, to the construction of the rail line to Blythe in 1915, *the town of Rice survived on a shoestring. Rice was a small haven in the desert, where miners could come down from the hills for enjoyment and refreshment. Where rail workers switched railcars, and where travelers could get water and gas on their way to other destinations. Rice would see itself grow with the development of the Colorado River Aqueduct, only to plummet upon completion of the project. World War II would also see Rice grow between 1942 and 1944, only to decline once more. The final deathblow perhaps came to Rice with the closure of the Midland mining operation in 1966. The meager existence Rice held, quickly fell when the rail line ceased operations there. Nevertheless, for a time the town survived with an active Union 76 gas station and a post office well into the 1970s. Several homes and buildings where displayed in three 1990s pictures that demonstrate a partial resemblance of an earlier period.*

Gladis and Eloise would go to the local Union 76 gas station twice a week to get ten gallons of fresh water. The family preferred the freshwater delivered from Santa Fe Springs than the local well water, which had high levels of alkaline and salt and was considered foul. Rather than carry the cans, Gladis would drive the family car several hundred feet, where two 5-gallon cans fit snuggly in the back seat. Gladis paid ½ cent for each gallon of water if she also bought gas, but had to pay 1 cent if she did not buy them together. When they went back to their campsite, they would use 5-gallons for washing and 5-gallons for rinsing.

Gladis used an old fashion washboard to wash the family laundry, because there was no electricity in the family encampment for a washing machine. Interestingly, there were only a few locations around Rice that had any electricity at all. After finishing the laundry, the water was poured into an outdoor tub for bathing. Eloise would bathe first, followed by Gladis; and when Atkins returned from work, he would take his bath last. Never wanting to waste water, Gladis would than wash the floor of the family trailer, followed by the family privy. According to Eloise, "My mother had the cleanest privy in Rice."

Gladis became upset with the high prices she was forced to pay for foodstuffs in Rice, and often complained to her daughter and husband. The family had goals and wanted to save money for their future. Gladis was instrumental in keeping the family expenses in line and went to great lengths to save money. She even kept a journal of all expenditures, and out of this written record, it was calculated it cost the family $2.00 a day to live in Rice. However, for Gladis this was too much, so the family started to take regular weekend trips to either Blythe or Needles to purchase supplies. Gladis learned it was much cheaper to stock up on supplies, rather than pay the high prices in the local company store, known as Home Supply. According to Eloise, like most structures in Rice, the Home Supply building was rather small and crowded full of stock, no larger than 15' by 15' in size.

Even though a trip to Twentynine Palms was perhaps just as close as other towns, it did not have much in the way of supplies. Another problem for travelers driving from Rice to Twentynine Palms was the lack of a well-maintained road. Twentynine Palms had only been pioneered a decade earlier, so there was little interest in traveling there during the 1930s. A well-maintained blacktop road was not developed from Rice to Twentynine Palms until the late 1940s.

Eloise, like most children living in Rice, attended the company-sponsored school. The schoolhouse was already up and running when Eloise arrived in 1935, however she remembers an addition was added within the year. The single room schoolhouse quickly grew to two classrooms in 1936. The original section of the school had a concrete floor and the new edition had a wood floor. Mr. and Mrs. Crawford ran the school while Eloise attended. Mr. Crawford taught the older children and Mrs. Crawford schooled the younger ages. At the beginning of the 1936 school year, there was an estimated 40-45 children attending. Although, it should also be mentioned that aqueduct workers came and went, often placing and taking out their children during the school year. At one point, the schoolhouse became overcrowded due to an unexpected increase in student numbers. The school was located next to a road (now a highway), so a fence was placed around most of the schoolyard. The school grounds also boasted a baseball field and a basketball court, which were used by the people residing in Rice after school hours. Simply because of its existence, it became a popular spot for amusement.

Pupils taking a picture in front of Rice Schoolhouse about 1937
(Eloise Marlowe photograph)

Another local site for recreation and leisure in Rice was the movie theater, which was set up by the Jahn Bassie Company for employee entertainment. The movie theater also served as the town church each Sunday morning. The town of Rice conducted non-denominational church services for the townspeople and employees of the company. The building appears to be a temporary structure made of corrugated metal. In fact, most structures in Rice were either hurriedly built or built to be moved, which was common among boom and mining towns in the area.

Eloise, like most children in Rice, had a great amount of free playtime. Most of the children frequently went to the movie theater and played around the school grounds. However, there were other activities to keep the children busy as well. Eloise and her friends would often scavenge the town for empty pop bottles, which would gain them a penny credit at the Home Supply store. Whenever possible the children of Rice would also go around town reselling discarded magazines. The biggest and most enjoyable job Eloise did was to deliver telegraphs around town. It was a common practice to hire the children of Rice to deliver telegraphs as they came in. Additionally, Eloise enjoyed playing hopscotch with the other children, and played with her paper dolls while in the family encampment.

The Ruins of the Rice Schoolhouse in 2008. Notice the metal fabrication lying on the ground and compare it to the metal from the picture from above. According to Eloise Marlowe, who lived in Rice in 1935-1937 this was the site of the old schoolhouse.

The Family lived out of a travel trailer about 6' wide by 50' long. Once Atkins settled the family down in Rice, he ventured to Santa Ana California where he purchased two large citrus tarps. Upon his return to Rice, he quickly built a tarp extension to the family trailer. He used excess 4"x4"s to make a frame, followed by covering it with the citrus tarps. This covered extension added greater space to the family encampment, and gave additional protection from the harsh desert sun. A fine gravel floor was laid inside the tarp-covered addition to give the family a level floor and to keep from tracking dirt into the family trailer. Gladis immediately went to work arranging the new addition, and according to Eloise, it was so comfortable that the family often slept in it, rather than the trailer.

A recent inspection of the Rice area discovered about eight camp-sites within two hundred feet south of the Union 76 gas station. About half the sites, had a 55-gallon drum imbedded partially in the ground, which could have been used for holding trash? This *discovery aligns with Eloise's account of the campsite her family developed. It appears there were other encampments dotting the area. There is perhaps a great deal of trash buried around Rice, which could be an archeological refuge for interested researchers in the future.*

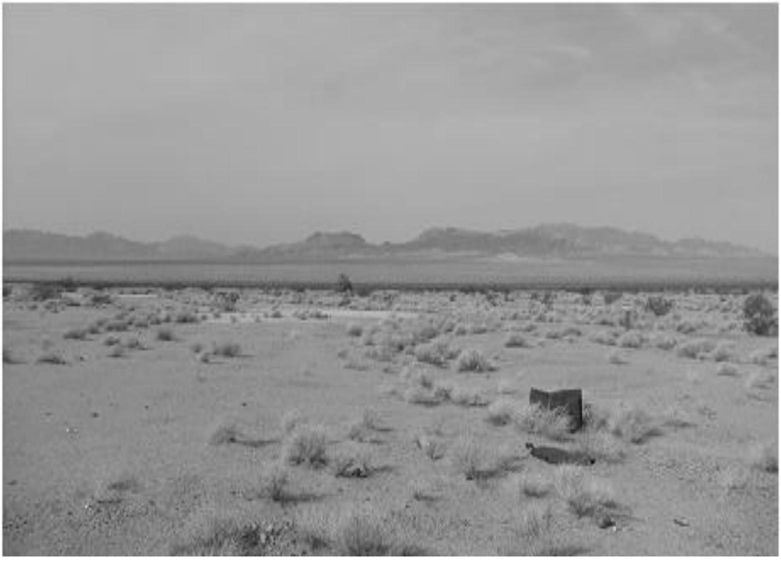
Fenced in area around the Rice Schoolyard ruins, and what looks like the outside basketball court.

Eloise mentioned that her father buried the family trash and did not burn it, which seems to make sense due to the closeness of other encampments and the location of the town. The family also had two cats that helped keep pests to a minimum. Although, they could do little to control the persistence of Sidewinder Snakes that kept coming into their encampment. Eloise learned to run quickly to either her father or mother who had a handy pole for cornering and killing them.

The summer months in Rice were known to reach temperatures as high as 130 degrees. As such, Gladis and Eloise would flee Rice each summer to Chavez Ravine, another elapsed California community. Chavez Ravine was once a popular low-income community, especially admired by Mexican Americans. According to Eloise, there were many low income Anglos who lived on the edges of the Ravine. Before Atkins took the family to Rice, they had owned a home there. Eloise's aunt and uncle took possession of the home when the family went to Rice, however Gladis and Eloise would frequently visit the old home each summer.

Chavez Ravine was once a popular Mexican American community, before the City of Los Angeles forced its residences to move for a planned housing project. In time, this project failed. However, eventually the Brooklyn Dodgers were enticed to L.A. when a new stadium was proposed and built on the land taken by force several years earlier.

Before moving to Rice in 1935, Atkins told Eloise not to learn or speak Spanish when she attended the 2nd and 3rd grades in Chavez Ravine. Even though Eloise had to go to a school that was primarily made up of Mexican children, Atkins went to great lengths to detach the family from the Mexican culture that surrounded them. When asked, Eloise stated her ethnic heritage was not of Mexican ancestry, but rather of Scottish, Irish, and Dutch ancestry. Eloise believed that Chavez Ravine was about 80% Mexican and 20% Anglo.



Fine gravel encampments south of Rice, just as Eloise described. Notice the unnatural white ground and 55-gallon drum next to each encampment.

It should be noted that the thoughts and actions followed by Atkins was common for the period and should be put into context. Mexicans were commonly recruited from Mexico for farm labor and the assimilation of cultures was discouraged. Even though the 21st century now looks upon such activity as acceptable, we should be careful not to disparage the actions of the family to protect Eloise from Anglo cultural alienation.

Eloise believed it was wrong what the City of Los Angeles did to the community of Chavez Ravine. Her ant and uncle also fought the city eviction process, and initially refused to leave. They only relented when they saw others being forcibly removed. Eloise treasured her summer months in Chavez Ravine with her family and if it were not for her father's love, she would never have wanted to return to Rice.

Eloise met the legendary Jessie Brown, who originally pioneered Rice when it was first called Blythe Junction. By the time Eloise met Jessie, she had taken on the nickname "Ma Brown." According to Eloise, Ma Brown was an elderly woman, who was well liked by everyone in Rice. She owned a tavern in town, while Eloise lived there. When a map and pictures of the ruins in Rice were shown to Eloise, she immediately pointed to the last standing wall in Rice today, and referred to the ruins as Ma Brown's Place. The wall still displays what must have been a brilliant fireplace; certainly, something Ma Brown would have been proud to display. On a more practical side, it also helped heat the patrons during the colder desert evenings. The last remaining wall in Rice is perhaps a poignant monument to Jessie "Ma" Brown, an incredible pioneering woman. Where most men gave up, Jessie endured.

About 1909, Jessie and Floyd Brown set up a business that lasted until Jessie gave it up. Floyd divorced Jessie after he thought she was unfaithful to him. Although to be fair, it should be mentioned that Floyd was a known philanderer, who would use his influence, and money to win the hearts of many women between Rice/Blythe Junction and Blythe. It did not matter whether a woman was married are not, when Floyd wanted her, he would not stop until he attained her affection. This, perhaps more than anything else, led to the split up between Jessie and Floyd Brown. It appears Jessie stayed in Rice and gained the loving support of the people who lived and stopped in Rice. Furthermore, Floyd became important in the development of Blythe, and is affectionately remembered there.

Jessie "Ma" Brown's Place, fireplace/wall ruin in 2007.
The only remaining stonewall in Rice, California.

According to Eloise, Rice was ripe with working prostitutes. The men in the area patronized three taverns in Rice, Ma Browns Place, Curley's Bar, and Al's Saloon. Curley's Bar had rooms to rent, which was the only sort of hotel in town. This perhaps made Curley's Bar the first location for men who were looking for a woman of little virtue. There was a popular nickname given to Rice by the aqueduct workers, they called it "Divorce City." Apparently, once the married women arrived in Rice with their husbands, they refused to live there and often went to stay with family. The departure of wives often left the men to their work and to find pleasure in the taverns of Rice. Jobs were hard to get during the great depression, thus men felt compelled to stay, while women often felt no such compulsion.

It is commonly known today that Rice had a Union 76 gas station, as parts of the station are still visible. What is not commonly known, Rice actually had three gas stations. The last to remain was the Union 76 station, which closed in the early 1970s. There was a gas pump at Ma Browns Place to the east along the highway, and according to Eloise, there was another gas station west of town across the cut off to Blythe. The third gas station ruin was almost not seen, but due to Eloise's description, it was located.

An additional search of an area west of the Union 76 station, across the cut off to Blythe, found the ruins of a gas station, as Eloise had declared. These ruins were not part of the initial search, but after Eloise mentioned the additional gas station, another search of the area was undertaken. The gas station was exactly located where Eloise said it would be.

It might come as a surprise to many people, but Rice had a hog farm. Paul Cochet was the proprietor of the Rice Hog Farm, which became popular among the aqueduct workers who sought his pigs. As the aqueduct moved across the desert towards civilization, Paul would drive to the camps [which were set up along the construction sites of the aqueduct] to deliver his pork meat. As the project ended so too did Paul's prosperous hog farm. He eventually moved to Blythe and died in the early 1990s.

Gas station ruin east of Rice, across the rail tracks: Research about Rice has determined there were three gas stations in Rice during the 1930s. A research personal account stated there was the Union

76 station in the center of town and there were two other locations, one east, and one west of town.

Rice railroad shack in 2008

Healthcare was available only once a week when an interning doctor came to Rice to treat people. There were only three options, drive to Blythe or Needles, or wait until the interning doctor showed up. Most people opted to wait rather than venture through the desert desolation surrounding Rice.

Eloise recalled a man who broke his leg and was forced to wait several days until the interning doctor returned. On another occasion, a man pumping gas at the Union 76 gas station caught fire. Apparently, it was a hot and sunny day, and when the man created friction by rubbing the nozzle against the rim of the gas tank, a spark caused the car and man to catch fire. There was no memory of what happened to the man; however, it was safely assumed that he was rushed to a hospital for medical care. In the late 1930s, it would appear a broken leg was not considered an emergency, but a burnt man was.

Eloise recalled a doctor's appointment she had in Rice. She thought the world of the interning doctor after he prescribed a Hershey chocolate bar for an illness she was suffering from, "He told my mother that all I needed was a Hershey chocolate bar, and to give me one each day until I got better."

Rice water tank in 2008

There was no law enforcement in Rice; however the county sheriff was known to stop by from time to time. The Jahn Bassie Company would fire any employee who became unruly, or management simply dealt with it internally. If a problem did occur, it normally happened in the evening hours within the three bars in town.

In the 1909 to 1915 period, before the name was changed to Rice, Blythe Junction was known as a wild western town in No Man's Land California. Murder and fights were common in those days. Additionally, as any good parent would do, even if there were an occurrence in Rice, it can be easily surmised that Eloise's parents sheltered her from the trouble.

To the east of Rice laid the once thriving township of Vidal, which was founded in 1909 as a trading post was once the home of Wyatt Earp in the early 1920s. Earp enjoyed two things in his life; he had a small mine in the Whipple Mountains, with a shaft over 100 feet.

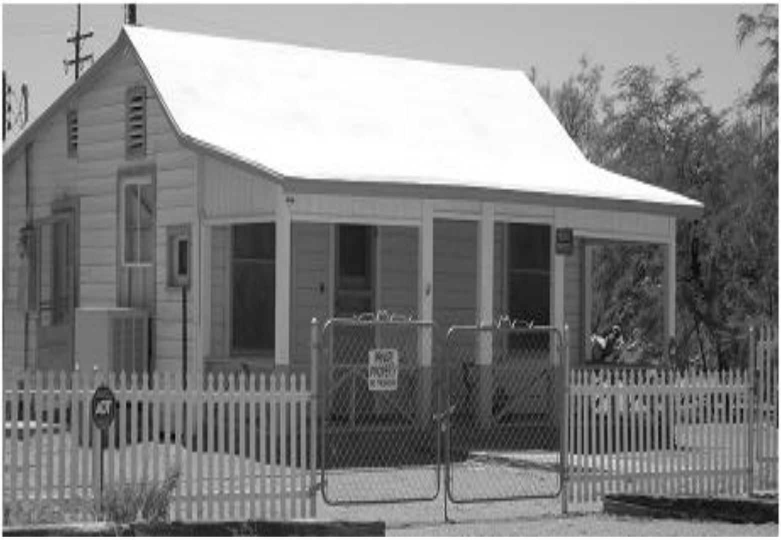
Earp operated his mine intermittently until he died in 1929 at the age of 80. He also liked to gamble; of which gambling was very popular in Rice from its beginning.

According to Eloise, who had visited Vidal on numerous occasions, felt everyone from Rice considered the town aristocratic. Vidal had nice homes; several store fronts and a sense of culture. Compared to Rice, which was on the verge of lawlessness and extinction, Vidal was delightful.

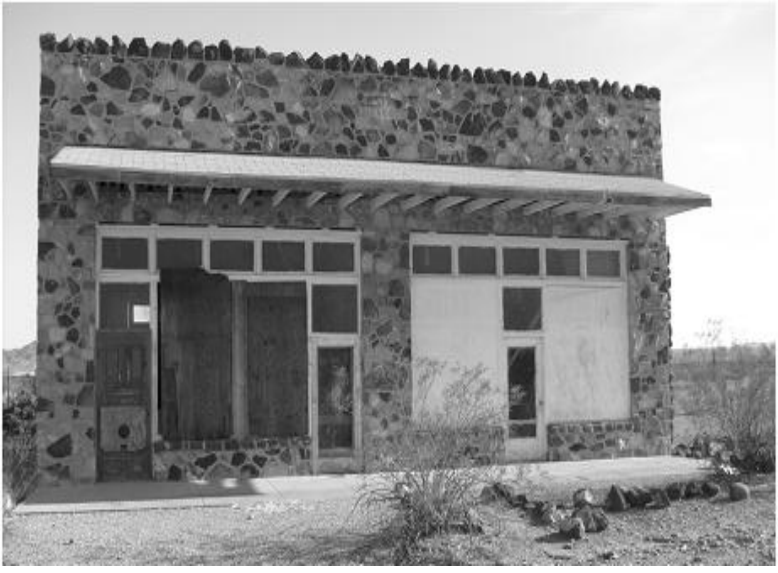
If Wyatt did visit Rice, he would not have talked about it to his friends in Vidal, who were considered high society. There was a direct rail line from Vidal to Rice, which would have made any trip relatively easy. Additionally, Wyatt was known to spend his summer months in Hollywood, as such he more than likely went directly through Rice on the way to Los Angeles.

The rail connection to Midland and Blythe in 2008

One of the two nearest towns by rail was Vidal. In fact, a Google map search discovered that main street went directly towards Rice, and eventually connected to highway 62. The common route today is through Vidal Junction, but this route would have been too far for most pioneers of the early 20th century. It is a speculation by the author, but it can be easily assumed that Wyatt Earp quite possibly went to Rice during his stay in Vidal, only a few years before Eloise *moved there. Wyatt died in 1929, only six years before the period under discussion.*



Wyatt Earp's restored home in Vidal in 2008



Ruins of Vidal storefront on Main Street.
There were only 5 livable buildings in Vidal in 2008

HOLLY
CEMETERY

Vidal cemetery in 2008

In spite of its desolate location, people are still being buried in

Vidal cemetery today

View of Vidal's water tank from its cemetery in 2008

Footnote:

Upon the completion of this story was discovered an article written by John Hilton in the February 1941 *Desert Magazine*, which mentioned the following about Jessie "Ma" Brown, which gives us additional balance to many commonly held beliefs about her,

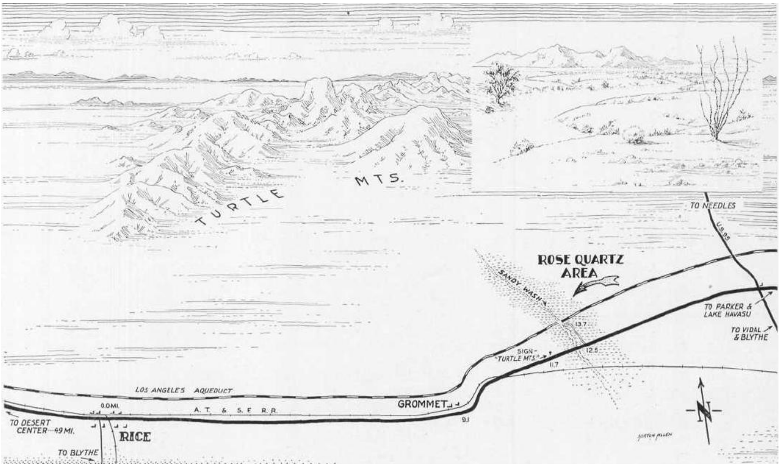
> All the old-time prospectors in the Southwest know Jessie Brown. For many years she was a sort of landmark in the old desert outpost of Blythe Junction, now Rice. Critics can find much to condemn in the life of Mrs. Brown. But beneath the rough exterior there was a big heart. A true frontier woman, she suffered hardships and disappointments beyond the endurance of most women. She carried on a man's work, hauling water, packing burros, holding mining claims—labors that brought profit to every one except herself. I doubt if there are many among us who would have endured her trials—and yet retained the generous attitude toward the sick and discouraged and the down-andouter that was always a part of her nature.
>
> I first met Mrs. Brown in 1932. I had just opened my little gem shop on the desert. Money was scarce and I was spending all the time I could spare prospecting the desert in search of minerals for my stock. I had heard reports of

agates and chalcedony in the Turtle Mountains, so I cranked up my Model T and took the trail in that direction.

The road to Rice was merely a pair of wheel tracks through cacti and sand. A trip into this no man's land was an adventure, especially in midsummer in a flivver that had no top. I had spent most of the afternoon digging out of the sand and refilling the radiator from a rapidly diminishing water supply. Finally the old car dropped into a sandy chuckhole and stopped. I tried all the hocus pocus I knew, but the flivver never budged. It was evident there was an internal ailment that required something more than a shovel and a strong back.

The hot sun was dropping low in the west and I could make out the buildings of Rice, distorted to many times their true proportions by the distant heat waves. There was nothing to do but walk. I waited until the sun was down and then filled my canteen with the last water in my reserve drum, and started along the sandy road. The dry hot night, the long weary miles, and the silence broken only by crunch of my own feet in the sand, seemed never-ending. The memory of the coal oil lamp in the window of Mrs. Brown's cabin and her cheerful "hello" when I came to the door, still brings a warm glow to my heart. When I told her my story, my problem immediately became her problem. Her cook, she said, was in the other shack, but she would call him. As soon as I had eaten a bite, we would take their truck and tow my car in.

Late that night we returned with the disabled auto, and confirmed the fact that some gears had been stripped. That meant ordering parts from San Bernardino. I think Mrs. Brown sensed the fact that I was mentally figuring the cost and trying to balance it against my meager cash supply, for she suddenly offered a suggestion. ‘I have a couple of wrecked flivvers in the back yard," she said, "and I believe the rear ends are all right. You can have the parts from either of them if you are willing to tear them down.’ It is needless to say her offer was accepted. And that is how I came to be the guest of Mrs. Brown for a couple of days, and learned the story of her life. She also told me about a number of mineral deposits which she thought might be of interest to a young fellow trying to make a living on the desert… We continued through Rice to Grommet, a section camp on the Santa Fe railroad that parallels the highway. We crossed the railroad tracks and then slowed down so I could observe the character of the float along the roadside. Soon we stopped the car and began to look around. 'Is this what you are looking for?' Steve called as he picked up a stone. I examined his specimen, and sure enough, it was a wind worn piece of pale rose quartz. Other samples were picked up and we found we were on the edge of a field where the quartz is scattered among the pebbles on the flat mesa. Farther down the road we came to an area where the desert is liberally sprinkled with specimens, not only of rose quartz but white and bluish pebbles of the same substance.


TURTLE MTS.
TO NEEDLES
U.S. 95
ROSE QUARTZ AREA
SANDY WASH
13.7
TO PARKER & LAKE HAVASU
TO VIDAL & BLYTHE
SIGN- "TURTLE MTS."
12.5
11.7
LOS ANGELES AQUEDUCT
GROMMET
0.0 MI.
A. T. & S. F. R. R.
9.1
TO DESERT CENTER—49 MI.
RICE
TO BLYTHE
N
NORTON ALLEN

Sketch from Desert Magazine showing the Rose Quartz area, east of Rice (Blythe Junction)

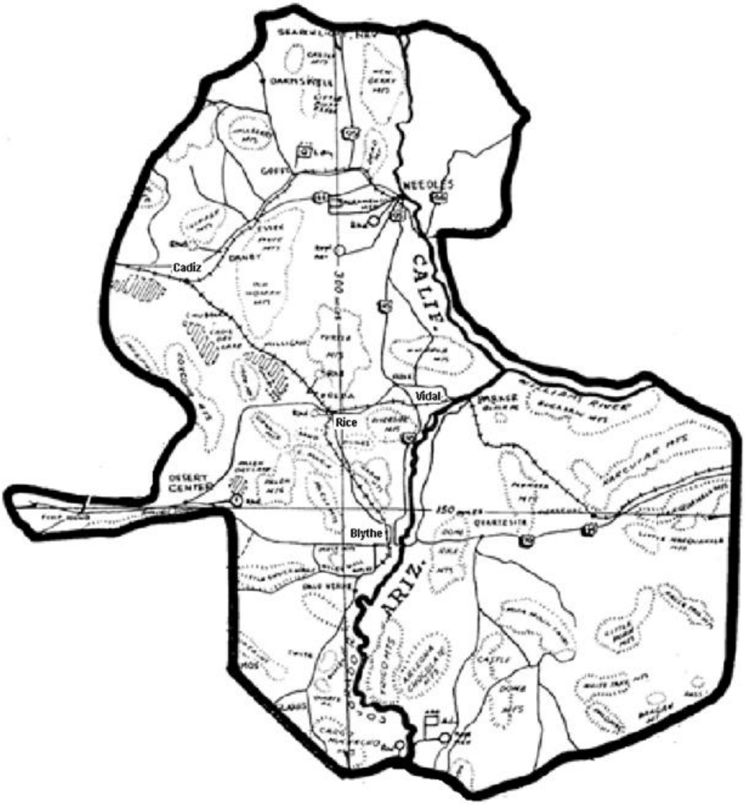
Chapter 13

The Desert Training Center around Rice

With Rommel in North Africa and a Japanese task force in the Pacific making headlines around the world, the United States military was preparing the Desert Training Center to counter both, desert warfare, and a possible attack on the West Coast. General George Patton would eventually become the master planner for this mammoth military training exercise; whereupon he set up Camp Young, which was the center of all activity in the region.

There is no indication of a large rail depot in Rice today, although there is a small metal structure remaining that looks like it might have been used as a temporary depot.

Patton was sent to California in March 1942 for the purpose of establishing the Desert Training Center; he eventually decided on the Camp Young site as his headquarters, which was about fifty miles southwest of Rice in April, near Desert Center, California. Out of the 87-army units formed during World War II, twenty trained in the desert area around Rice. The training received, between 1942 and 1944, was perhaps the most realistic available to any units training in the United States before being shipped overseas; Patton made sure of that. The sheer size of the area certainly allowed for massive combined operations, including planes, tanks, infantry, and actual live firing operations. Operations in and around Camp Young quickly became the largest military post within the United States, with eventual growth reaching over 28,000 square miles by mid 1943. The Camp area had several sizable communities near its boundaries, including Yuma, Blythe, Indio, and Needles.


NEEDLES
Cadiz
CALIF.
Vidal
Rice
DESERT CENTER
150 miles
300 miles
Blythe
QUARTZSITE
ARIZ.
COLORADO RIVER

Rice is almost centered within the Desert Training Area

.

There were several sizable facilities already in operations before the establishment of Camp Young. Camp Seeley had a field artillery area near Imperial, California, an engineer test section was near Yuma, an antiaircraft artillery-training center was at Camp Hann, near Riverside, and the Army Air Corp. had operational facilities at Victorville, Las Vegas, and San Bernardino. The Desert Training Center eventually stretched to Pomona, California, Phoenix, Arizona, Mexican border near Yuma and Searchlight Nevada. There were ten temporary divisional camps built within this area, some were combat units, while others were simply supply units. Arriving units built most of the camps, although improvements, like concrete pads, were added later. There were numerous camps and supporting airfields within the area, including, Blythe Army Air Field, Camp Clipper, Camp Coxcomb, Camp Goffs, Camp Granite, Camp Iron Mountain, Camp Ibis, Desert Center Army Air Field, Needles Airport, Camp Ono, Palen Pass, Camp Pilot Knob, Rice Army Air Field, Camp Rice, Shavers Army Air Field, Thermal Army Air Field, Camp Young; and four were in Arizona, including Camps Laguna, Bouse, Horn, and Hyder.

Temporary Rail House/Depot in Rice:
This structure looks like a temporary rail house in the rail yard.

The massive amount of troops and military equipment moving in and out of the area led to problems for the Transportation Corps., which was partly due to the inaccessibility of the regions limited rail line facilities, which often resulted in congestion and stop orders down the line. Supporting movements overseas, and at the same time handling movements within the Desert Training Center, led to several unusual requests on the part of the Corps. The biggest decision made related directly to troop movements; such as, as one unit entered, another unit was forced to move out. And to relieve rail traffic, vehicles were employed throughout the area to better help move equipment by road.

Freda Rail Depot Siding Ruins: Freda rail depot ramp was used to unload and load heavy military equipment between 1942 and 1944. Notice the dirt foundation and railroad pilings, which are the only remains of a once thriving, yet temporary, rail yard.

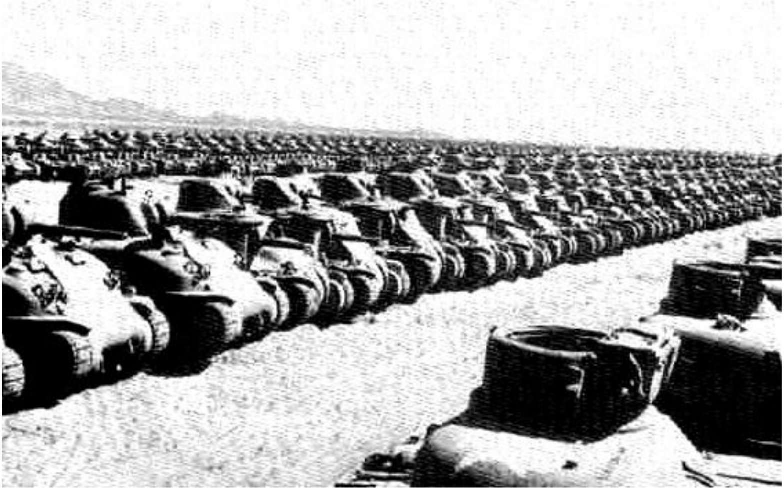
All campsites were chosen due to their location to rail lines and available water supplies. Each division required six hundred railroad Pullman cars for movement into and out of the area. The main receiving center was two-miles west of Rice at a rail stop called Freda; although there were others, like another site at Grommet, which was located east of Rice. The Grommet siding was also much closer to Camp Rice and Rice Airfield; and, at least during the initial build up of these camps, it seems likely that Grommet was used most often; although, Freda had a siding, whereas Grommet loaded directly from the rail line, which makes

Freda the more likely location for unloading equipment throughout the wider area. Grommet also had a sturdy earth loading ramp, which appeared to be made for unloading heavy equipment like tanks and trucks. Reports from Freda estimated that crews could unload anywhere between 50 and 80 boxcars full of supplies each night, which certainly helped the population grow to almost 200,000 troops in the first year.

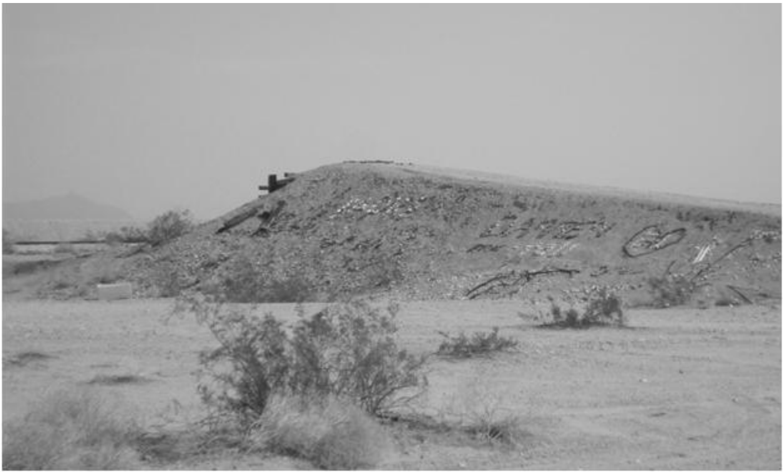
Rail Turn Out at Freda: Freda rail depot is a couple of miles west of Rice and was used to unload and load military equipment between 1942 and 1944.

Additional Freda Loading Ramp: Here is a ramp at Freda, about 200 feet from the tracks. It is reinforced with rock for heavy equipment. This ramp *seems to have been used as an additional way to load and unload heavy equipment onto trucks.*

Interestingly, due to a shortage of manpower, the Signal Corps. was forced to relinquish many of its duties to the local telephone company; as a result, much of the communications between military operations were forced to use the Blythe central exchange for a time.



Camp Freda, circa 1940s (Floie Barrows photograph)



Grommet Loading Ramp: Grommet loading ramp is about two miles east of Camp Rice along State Highway 62. The ramp is the only ruins left of what *was once a thriving railroad depot. Due to its close proximity, the ramp is believed to have been used to unload and load heavy military equipment between 1942 and 1944.*

Rice Road to Midland: This is the road to Midland and Blythe, which Floyd Brown completed to Rice near the turn of the 20th century.

Most camps, by design, maintained a Spartan existence; although, the military still built hospitals, railhead facilities, roads, airfields, and supply depots, which were built by Army engineering units, many of which were also training in the area before departing for overseas duties.

By mid April of 1942, lead troops and equipment started showing up all over the Desert Training Center area. Conversely, on July 26, 1942, the 3rd Armored Division was given the distinction of being the first division to arrive in Freda (Freda is about two miles east of Rice) with thirty trains full of all the equipment they would need. When they first arrived, troops stepped out of an air-conditioned railcar into a blast furnace; the wind was blowing and the temperature reached 130 degrees that day. After unloading the troops and equipment, the division moved thirteen miles west and established Camp Granite, which was near Iron Mountain. Troops and the attached engineering unit worked together; they made roads, ranges and shower and bath facilities adjacent to the Los Angeles Aqueduct.

View of Vidal rail line

Troops first stationed within the Desert Training Center quickly gave the area several epithets; “The Place God Forgot” and “A Desert Designed for Hell” became common statements amongst the men who had never seen such barrenness; and concerns of rattle snakes in bedding and scorpions in boots were commonly discussed. In time, after the men awoke to wetness and mud, they also realized their encampment was in a wash and the area was susceptible to summer flooding.

Relief from the isolation and heat of the desert was not always easy to achieve; although, troops still found relief from time to time. The Army implemented USO shows and organized sporting activities, but these were nothing compared to trips to nearby towns; these excursions where, however, not always successful. Organized dances in Needles and Indio sometimes had several hundred men and only a few women, which often ended in a commotion. Moreover, officials in Las Vegas were not happy after three hundred men rioted, which left one man dead and three injured; and reports of black men being mistreated were common, which led to one incident where several men seized arms and threatened to shoot up a local café as a result of their mistreatment.

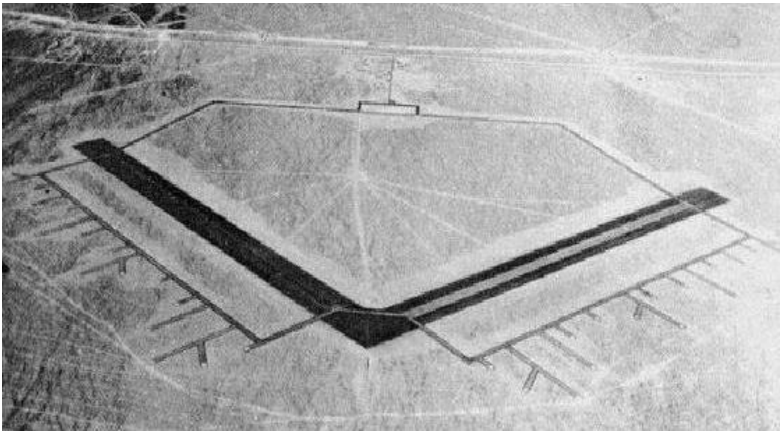
Ruins in Rice: These rock ruins in Rice are along State Highway 62, east of the Union 76 ruins.

An active communication zone was created south of Kelso and north of Desert Center, which seemed to be centered near Rice; this included Rice Army Airfield, Desert Center Army Airfield, and Shavers Summit Field. The communications zone was designed to surround the combat zone. This initial communications zone was eventually expanded to include the areas near Needles, Camp Young, Indio, Pomona, and Banning, California, as well as Yuma, Arizona. The general depot was located at Camp Young, while the communications zone was located in Banning. Moreover, Southern Pacific Railroad Company was the primary rail service provider for keeping the area supplied; and service-trucks ran supplies to the area on a 24-hour basis to supplement what the rails could not do.

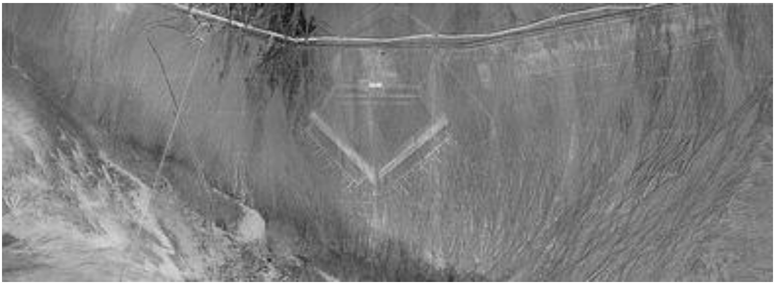
Gas Station Ruins in Rice: This is one of the gas pump ruins, among three gas stations, which were in Rice during the 1930s.

The War Department officially altered the name of the training area in October 1943 to the Desert Center Training Center, California-Arizona Maneuver (CAMA). However, for the most part, troops continued to call the area by its original name, or they used the acronym CAMA.

In two years, seven maneuvers were conducted. The first maneuver was conducted by Patton and was basic and perhaps unrealistic, especially when compared to the California Maneuver that lasted from October 1942 to March 1943. In the interim, the army tested new equipment, training systems, tactics, transportation supply, and communications techniques, all within an arid desert environment. Exercises were also conducted and coordinated with the Army Air Corps and some 20,000 tanks, jeeps, motorcycles, helicopters, and airplanes. Military exercises were performed in the following Mohave valleys, Ward, Lanfair, Paiute, Kelso, Fenner, Ivanpah, Clipper, Cadiz, and Chemehuevi. Patton often commanded troop movements from atop a hill appropriately called Kings Throne.



1942 aerial view of Army Rice airbase



2010 aerial view of the abandoned Army Rice airbase

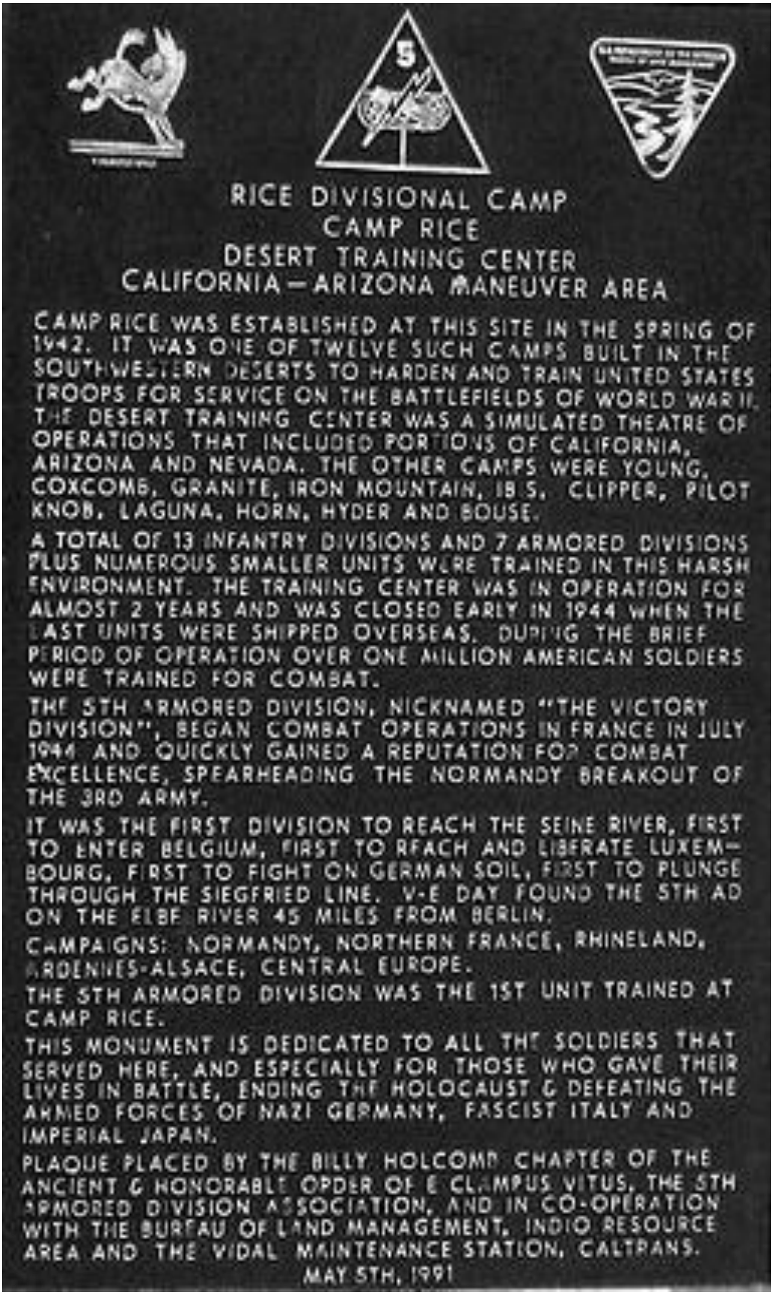
Patton was unrelenting in his ill treatment of his men; his reasoning of course was understandable, only perhaps because he wanted to create a realistic war-training environment to better prepare them for the arduous war that lay ahead. Patton ordered military exercises be conducted in a realistic war-like environment. His men did not have the use of electric lights, heat, or heated water; and the most controversial decision Patton ordered was to ration drinking water to the troops. After this ill decision was recognized, refrigerated boxcars were ordered into the Desert Training Center area to help bring down the men’s core body temperature.

In fact, the experience these troops endured had such an impact that when they entered Europe and became fatigued, Patton would threaten his men with their return to the Desert Training Center if they did not shape up and start winning; which some believe helped win the war.

Many people liked to characterize Patton's behavior during this time; he often bullied and insulted his subordinates in order to keep his troops in concert; and by the time of the 2nd California Maneuver, which started in March 1943, strains became apparent by his field commanders.

Rice Army airbase today

Continuing shipments of service units overseas were putting strains on manpower and supplies within the Desert Training Center; and, as a result, by late 1943, the War Department ordered it closed on April 30, 1944. Only three facilities remained opened after April, Camp Young, the Communication Headquarters near Banning, and Pomona Ordinance Depot; these three facilities were responsible for policing the Maneuver area, closing all the camps and collecting and salvaging all equipment left by departing units. Upon the closure of the Desert Training Center it was reported that over 1,500 disabled vehicles were gathered and buildings in the area were disassembled by Italian prisoners of war, who were also recruited to pick up unexploded ordnances; no mention about how many of them died as a result.



RICE DIVISIONAL CAMP
CAMP RICE
DESERT TRAINING CENTER
CALIFORNIA—ARIZONA MANEUVER AREA

CAMP RICE WAS ESTABLISHED AT THIS SITE IN THE SPRING OF 1942. IT WAS ONE OF TWELVE SUCH CAMPS BUILT IN THE SOUTHWESTERN DESERTS TO HARDEN AND TRAIN UNITED STATES TROOPS FOR SERVICE ON THE BATTLEFIELDS OF WORLD WAR II. THE DESERT TRAINING CENTER WAS A SIMULATED THEATRE OF OPERATIONS THAT INCLUDED PORTIONS OF CALIFORNIA, ARIZONA AND NEVADA. THE OTHER CAMPS WERE YOUNG, COXCOMB, GRANITE, IRON MOUNTAIN, IBIS, CLIPPER, PILOT KNOB, LAGUNA, HORN, HYDER AND BOUSE.

A TOTAL OF 13 INFANTRY DIVISIONS AND 7 ARMORED DIVISIONS PLUS NUMEROUS SMALLER UNITS WERE TRAINED IN THIS HARSH ENVIRONMENT. THE TRAINING CENTER WAS IN OPERATION FOR ALMOST 2 YEARS AND WAS CLOSED EARLY IN 1944 WHEN THE LAST UNITS WERE SHIPPED OVERSEAS. DURING THE BRIEF PERIOD OF OPERATION OVER ONE MILLION AMERICAN SOLDIERS WERE TRAINED FOR COMBAT.

THE 5TH ARMORED DIVISION, NICKNAMED "THE VICTORY DIVISION", BEGAN COMBAT OPERATIONS IN FRANCE IN JULY 1944 AND QUICKLY GAINED A REPUTATION FOR COMBAT EXCELLENCE, SPEARHEADING THE NORMANDY BREAKOUT OF THE 3RD ARMY.

IT WAS THE FIRST DIVISION TO REACH THE SEINE RIVER, FIRST TO ENTER BELGIUM, FIRST TO REACH AND LIBERATE LUXEMBOURG, FIRST TO FIGHT ON GERMAN SOIL, FIRST TO PLUNGE THROUGH THE SIEGFRIED LINE. V-E DAY FOUND THE 5TH AD ON THE ELBE RIVER 45 MILES FROM BERLIN.

CAMPAIGNS: NORMANDY, NORTHERN FRANCE, RHINELAND, ARDENNES-ALSACE, CENTRAL EUROPE.

THE 5TH ARMORED DIVISION WAS THE 1ST UNIT TRAINED AT CAMP RICE.

THIS MONUMENT IS DEDICATED TO ALL THE SOLDIERS THAT SERVED HERE, AND ESPECIALLY FOR THOSE WHO GAVE THEIR LIVES IN BATTLE, ENDING THE HOLOCAUST & DEFEATING THE ARMED FORCES OF NAZI GERMANY, FASCIST ITALY AND IMPERIAL JAPAN.

PLAQUE PLACED BY THE BILLY HOLCOMB CHAPTER OF THE ANCIENT & HONORABLE ORDER OF E CLAMPUS VITUS, THE 5TH ARMORED DIVISION ASSOCIATION, AND IN CO-OPERATION WITH THE BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT, INDIO RESOURCE AREA AND THE VIDAL MAINTENANCE STATION, CALTRANS.

MAY 5TH, 1991

A plaque at a monument near old Rice Army airbase

No one could have realistically predicted the outcome of Erwin Rommel's romp in North Africa. Early indications gave the appearance that the United States would have to fight in the desert; as such, the War Department made the wise decision to develop a realistic desert training area. Even though events turned against Rommel by early 1943, he still remained a threat in Europe. This threat, however, shifted to the European continent; as such, so too did the War Departments emphasis, which led to the early closure of the Desert Training Center. Nevertheless, this two-year experience ended the most realistic United States training area ever developed. Many of his own troops strongly believed that the realistic combat experiences they gained within the Desert Training Center were, without question, instrumental in the ultimate success the United States had during World War II.

By the time the Desert Training Center area closed about one million men and women had gone through desert combat training, and over 1,000 soldiers died as a result of the realistic training and harsh environment.

Chapter 14

Melody Knolls

While Cary and Donna Crane visited Melody Knolls in May 2008, your author was lucky enough to sit down with them and get their story. The Crane's now live in Oklahoma, but come to the area to visit their friends and neighbors each spring; something they have done since the early 1960's.

welcome
to
Melody Knolls

Melody Knolls ground breaking ceremony in the 1950's (Crane photograph)

Cary first came to Melody Knolls in 1958, when he visited his distant relatives Marie and Joe De Salliers, who were a popular couple that enjoyed entertaining their family and friends in the village as often as they could. Marie also wrote about Melody Knolls for the *Desert Trail Newspaper* in Twentynine Palms; and for a time, she kept a scrapbook of her articles, which eventually ended up in the hands of Cary Crane. And because this invaluable scrapbook was lent to your author, an accurate, but short, account of life in Melody Knolls has been left for us to enjoy today.

Joe and Marie De Salliers preparing wild lamb in 1960 (Crane photograph)

Furthermore, Harry and Lee Erwin, who also owned a home in Melody Knolls, sold real estate in and around the area and were very close friends with the De Salliers. Both couples owned land in the community and, in essence, were predominantly responsible for the development of the village; and this included its name. Therefore, it is safe to say that the history of Melody Knolls centered on the thoughtfulness of the De Salliers' and Erwin's, but there were of course others, as this account will attest.

The name Melody Knolls, as was told to your author, came about from these two couples. Melody had two meanings, first it meant happiness, which the community had become known for; and secondly, it was named after one of the areas daughter's –the daughter to Mr. and Mrs. V. Maxwell; and Knolls on the other hand referred to the knoll like hills, which are still evident today.

Marie preparing wild Lamb for dinner (Crane photograph)

With this important scrapbook in hand, we also now know that Melody Knolls was a relatively new community, which was further confirmed by Cary Crane. Crane understood that Melody Knolls started out of the areas land grant giveaway program by the United States federal government in the 1950's. When pressed for a specific date, he said only that, "The village developed during the mid 1950's." This information is an important historical point, for it had been rumored that the village was actually an offshoot of Dale Township; which is not true.

The De Salliers were full time residence, as would many others become. They entertained a great deal, and because land was easily had for a very low price, many of the people this couple entertained would eventually purchase land and build weekend homes as well. In reality, one only has to look around Melody Knolls today to see the impact this incredible couple had on the area; for there are dozens, if not hundreds of abandoned retreats from a bygone era, now known as the apex of Melody Knolls.

Before the community well everyone had to haul their water from Twenty-nine Palms (Crane photograph)

A number of little known events occurred from time to time in Melody Knolls, like the caravan of dignitaries that stopped in the village on their way to Parker Dam, which occurred in October 1960; with hundreds of people, including the United States Marine Corps band, State Senator Stanford Shaw, San Bernardino supervisors, Magda Lawson, Wesley Break, Nancy Smith, Richard Manly, and Paul Young. The caravan started in Yucca Valley, but picked up additional people in Joshua Tree and Twentynine Palms along the route. California State dignitaries were met by Arizona dignitaries in

Parker to officiate the opening of the new Baseline highway, which would improve travel through the Morongo Valley. Little did everyone in Melody Knolls know at the time, this would be the start of a slow decline for the once friendly village; although this would not occur for another 20 years or so, as many of its long time residence died off.

Basque sheepherders use to travel through Melody Knolls; often leaving some stragglers, which might be butchered for food (Crane photograph)

According to Lea Erwin’s hand written log of events and a newspaper article, the village received its first community phone in September 1960; this log was an interesting notation to her life in Melody Knolls and was very helpful in deciphering the period.

As was done often during the period, and before the well was put in, water had to be delivered, which was a common activity at the time. As well, air shows were a popular activity for those living in the area, as was reported in a newspaper clipping from Erwin’s scrapbook. One such show occurred in October 1960, which included the Shamrock Divers, and Ruble Seat Divers from Hollywood; along with a community dance and food and drink supplied by G. E. Kizer, who owned the Twentynine Palms A&W Root Beer, a once popular hot spot from the period.

Erwin cabin hosting friends for the weekend in 1960 (Crane photograph)

Thinking ahead was a necessary skill; as such, bringing with and stocking up on supplies became another common pursuit; from the simplest items, like food and water, to improvements on the cabin, like building supplies and trees.

Snowstorms were not a common occurrence; but, like any storm in the area, when they occurred they were pretty bad; as was the case in December 8, 1960, when the Erwin's were forced to drive through Lucerne in order to get to Melody Knolls due to snow in Yucca Valley, which blocked their normal route.

An entry dated Dec 8, 1960 also had an important historical point worth noting, "Joe was really feeling wonderful, left Monday A.M. with Joe laughing and waving. Little did we know that it would be the last time we would see him. He passed away the following day December 9, 1960 at 6:10 PM."

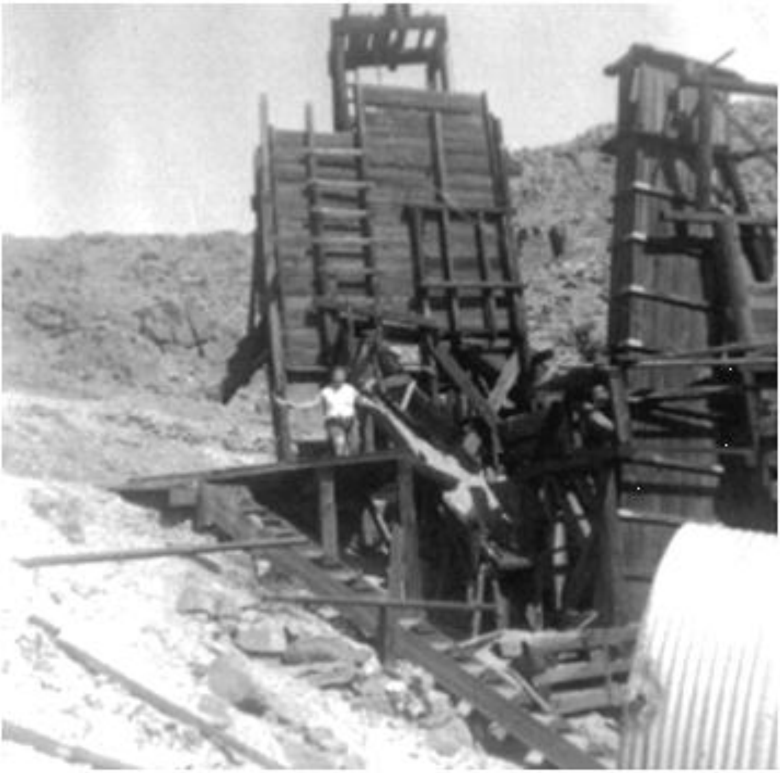
The next entry was dated December 30, 1960, "Marie came to Melody Knolls to be with her desert friends, helped us ring in the New Year with turkey and ham dinner at Starks."

As sad as the loss of Joe De Salliers was, Marie and his legacy of community continued for many years thereafter. As such, the log continued for a short time, with all accounts being positive; however, with the eventual loss of Marie, her writings and newspaper clippings ceased by 1963, whereupon she eventually moved to Yucaipa to be closer to her children, but the spirit of Melody Knolls lived on.

Karl Schapel's new cabin at the Golden Egg mine in 1961
(Crane photograph)

In the early 1960's, there were dozens of family's frequenting the Melody Knolls area on weekends, here are but a few: Mr. and Mrs. Ed Culhane from Torrance, California. Mr. M and Mrs. Della Stark from Van Nuys, California. Mr. and Mrs. Don Hambly from Pomona California. Mr. and Mrs. Harry Erwin also from Pomona, California. Mr. and Mrs. Frank Riddle. Mr. and Mrs. William Feree of Paramount, California. Mr. and Mrs. Howard McKenzie from Whittier; notation, Howard was a retired Lt. Commander J.G. for 30 years in the Navy. Mr. and Mrs. S. Spolar of La Puente, California. Mr. and Mrs. R.G. John from Oakland, California. Mr. and Mrs. Frank

Szager from Englewood California. Mr. and Mrs. Frank Gehr from Pomona, California. Mr. and Mrs. V. Maxwell from Pasadena, California. Mr. and Mrs. G. O'Neil from Fontana, California, and Mr. Vernon Prothero from Los Angeles, California.



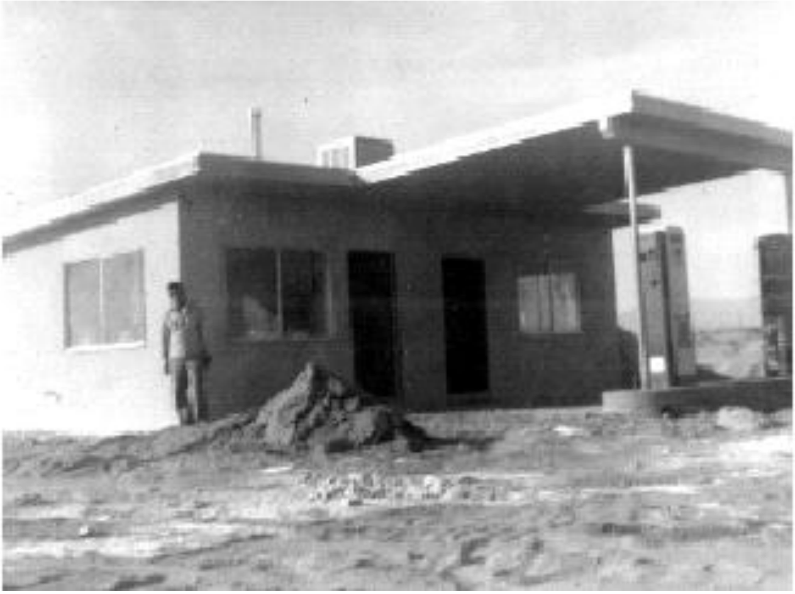
Lee Erwin at the shaft of the Gold Crown mine in 1960 (Crane photograph)

The story of Karl Schapel is also an interesting tale, which was displayed in a newspaper clipping from Lea Erwin's scrapbook; and confirmed by a tale told to this author by Anno Sanger, see next chapter. In short, Schapel was found wondering the valley (around Dale I) below his Golden Egg Mine in 1960. He had been badly scorched after his cabin caught fire; probably due to his propane tank malfunctioning. The Golden Egg Mine was a local favorite, and Schapel knew everyone would like to get their hands on his valuable gold that laid deep within; as such, if he did not recognize you when walking about his claim, he would bring out his shotgun and fired a warning.

In any event, after word of his injury, and the loss of his home, spread throughout the broader community, Marines on the Twenty-nine Palms base came to his aid. Through a national fundraising effort, more than 40 marines from across the United States spent several weekends rebuilding his cabin at the Golden Egg Mine; and as word spread, so too did the amount of local volunteers. Before the completion of the structure, more than 300 people from the surrounding area had worked on Schapel's new home. When completed, his new home measured about 14' by 30', not including his new porch; it also had the best view in the valley, looking down at Melody Knolls and the surrounding basin. At the time, Schapel was said to be 82 years old; and over 30 people celebrated his 83rd birthday within the year at his retreat above Melody Knolls.

Harry Erwin at the Gold Crown Mine mess hall in the background (Crane photograph)

Furthermore, contained within the photo album was a little known newspaper clipping from January 1961, which gave your author a glimpse into perhaps why the area was unsustainable. In essence, criminals eventually learned that most of the people who frequented the area around Melody Knolls were weekenders; this important fact was too much for those with a criminal mentality. As was reported in the newspaper clipping, a criminal ring had been caught by local law enforcement after an extensive investigation and stakeout. Apparently, 5 units had staked out over 150 square miles of desert over a several day period. Interestingly, the gang of thieves had coordinated their illegal activity with the use of radio communication and lookouts, but this did not stop the fully prepared Sheriff Department and Sheriff Reserve units, who were bent on bringing down the criminal gang.

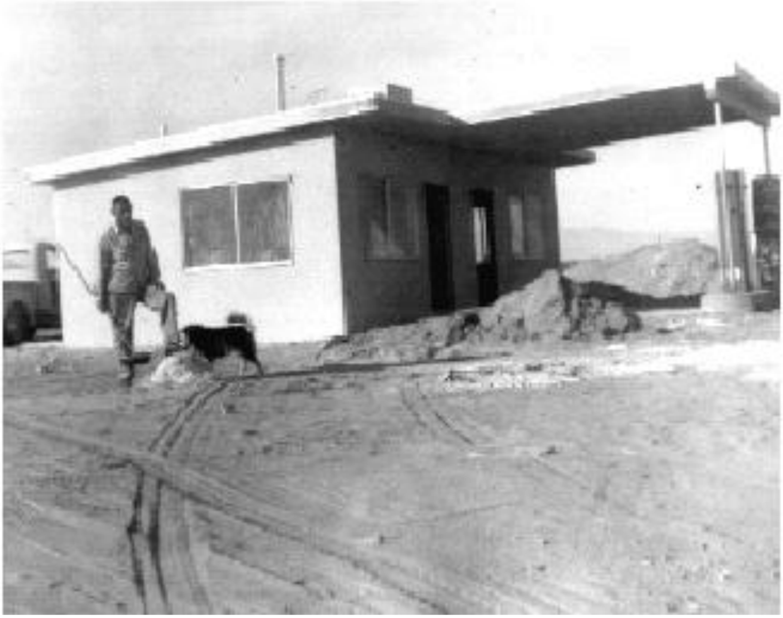


Melody Knolls Richfield gas station being built in 1961 (Crane photograph)

Captured were F. Nelson, Lucille Bridgeman and David Clark from Los Angeles, and Thomas Leftwich from Bell; who eventually confessed to over 75 break-ins over the past several years.

Unfortunately, cabin break-ins never ceased, and, in fact, continue to this day.

An important question is often asked about what happened to all the cabins that had been abandoned and why they were burnt down and or left unattended, which can also be asked about all the mining ruins in the area. The simple answer is that with so few people living in the area, it became all too easy for the criminal element to come in and do damage, and leave without ever being caught; and without a sustainable economic backing, younger people never replaced the elderly once they passed away. As such, the area surrounding Melody Knolls, now known as Wonder Valley, has maintained a meager existence through those people, often retirees, who wanted to live out their life in peace and tranquility in the California desert.



Another photo of Melody Knolls gas station in 1961 (Crane photograph)

Once again, being a part of the extended De Salliers family, Cary Crane frequented the area extensively and maintained a vivid recollection of these golden times; something he spoke of fondly during our interview. Crane also reminisced about Highway Patrolman Tom Brennan, who often frequented the village on his desert patrols. Unfortunately, Brennan was eventually killed by an oncoming vehicle on the Yucca Valley grade in the 1960's while helping a stranded traveler. He also remembered the Erwin's and their selling of real estate to dozens of weekenders.

After Cary married Donna in the early 1960's, they too built and developed a 5-acre parcel in the thriving village; who fondly remembered paying $5 an acre for their land and $200 for his land grant from the federal government. They were also required to build a 400 square foot structure within two years, which was built by the

Juno Development Company for a payment of $1,650; a price he felt was too expensive at the time. In time, they added on two bedrooms, which allowed them plenty of room for weekend retreats, especially after their children were born.

The Crane's spent many an Easter in Melody Knolls; in fact, they swear there are several eggs still hidden somewhere. Dune buggy runs were also a popular activity, especially up into the old mining area.

Doe Monroe's plane refueling at the Melody Knolls gas station in 1962 (Crane photograph)

Doe Monroe's plane taking off on the highway, both ends were blocked off so he could take off in 1962 (Crane photograph)

Melody Knolls community well being dug in 1961 (Crane photograph)

Vacant ruins of the Melody Knolls gas station in 2008

The mines throughout the area were frequented by many thrill seekers and even the criminal element from time to time. In fact, Crane mentioned the kidnapping that led local law enforcement officials into the Dale mining area during the 1960’s. In those days, the Gold Crown road was well maintained, which allowed a man who had kidnapped a woman to flee into the Dale mining district. The area was easy to get into; however, it was much harder to leave, especially with law enforcement blocking the primary entry and exit. Consequently, the sheriff's department did eventually catch up to the kidnapper and freed the woman.

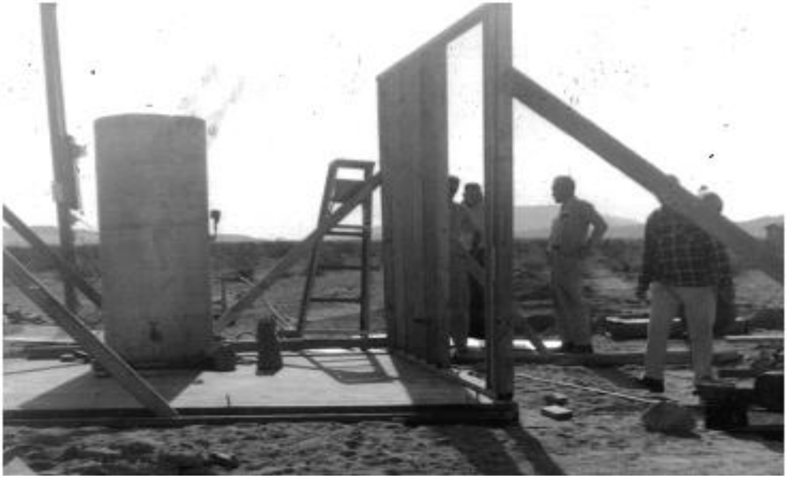
The Crane's also spoke fondly of the Melody Knolls gas station and market and its original owner's Don and Blanch Hambly; who said of Don, "If Don didn't eat or drink it; he refused to carry it in his market." For all general purposes, the gas station and market was the center of the village; where everyone stopped when passing through and wanted gas and or directions. And especially important, Twentynine Palms was about 17 miles away; so, if someone wanted to eat or drink and not drive to town, one had to the Hambly's Richfield gas station.

A big event for the residence of Melody Knolls (Crane photograph)

After the Melody Knolls gas station was built, it was a common activity to see planes land on the county road, now known as Highway 62. In those days, there was minimal traffic, so a plane could land without danger of being hit by an oncoming automobile.

Yet, what would a village be without water? In truth, until the community well was dug, life in the village was meager and hard; but after the well was drilled, the village thrived. With plenty of water to be had, plants were planted, trees survived and people flocked to the desert oasis. A water association was eventually established, which limited water to 15 homes in the growing village.

Lee Erwin in front of new community well in 1961 (Crane photograph)



All the men in Melody Knolls working on the new well house (Crane photograph)

Well house almost completed in 1962 (Crane photograph)

Melody Knolls well and well house is still operational in 2008

Lee and Harry Erwin in front of their cabin with highway and Dale basin in the background in 1960 (Crane photograph)

With the loss of Marie De Salliers in July 1963, no further records were kept in the scrapbook until April 8, 1970, when Lea Erwin received the book from Marie; a newspaper clipping did, however, bid goodbye to the “mayor” of Melody Knolls,

> Friends in the Small Tract area of Melody Knolls, east of 29 Palms, bid a reluctant farewell to their ‘Mayor.’ Mrs. Marie D. Salliers, at a potluck dinner served at the home of Frank and Claire Riddle on June 29. She has sold her home and taken up residence in Yucaipa to be near her children and grandchildren in Yucaipa and Rosemead.

Others present at the dinner were Sam and Audrey Gehr, Marion and Della Stark, Walter and Walsie Turner, and Bert and Clair Farnum.

Joe and Marie De Salliers and their four children leased four adjoining five-acre tracts 17 miles east of Four Corners (Melody Knolls); where the whole family, children and grandchildren, enjoyed many weekends building Mom and Dad's vacation home. By 1959, it was completed, whereupon Joe and Marie retired to the desert. They had a grand time planting trees and cactus; and soon it became a show place and was enjoyed by travelers on their way to and from Parker Dam.

At the time, the De Salliers place was the only home in the section; although, there are more than 50 or more cabins in the area, who voted to call their district Melody Knolls. As mentioned previously, Marie De Salliers had contributed news items to the *Desert Trail*, which were appreciated by the many tract owners who didn't visit their cabins very often, but these articles were sadly discontinued after Mr. De Salliers passed away in December 1960. Nevertheless, the scrapbook was once again restarted after a seven year lapse with a heading that read, "Lea Started Scrapbook Again April 1970."

One of the first newspaper headings from this new period was entitled, "Cabin Burglaries Hearing April 14." In short, four suspects were arrested for cabin burglaries in the Melody Knolls area; they included, Frank and Nancy Dowler, La Donna Barker and Katherine Cornelison; "Three of the four were apprehended in the act of burglarizing a desert cabin."

In spite of the apparent lack of people, activities in and around Melody Knolls continued, as was reported on April 8, 1970; with an article about Desert Corral 29, Equestrian Trails Inc., which sponsored its annual trail ride through the old mining area surrounding Melody Knolls. With Melody Knolls as a base, about 100 organizations and several hundred people trekked into the Dale mining area.

In the scrapbook another small newspaper clipping from May 6, 1970 gave your author an interesting account about the Dale Mining District; which reported before its closure, "100 tons of iron ore was being extracted daily from the Iron Age Mine." This mines closure was one of the last major mines in the area and a real economic loss to the valley.

The remaining newspaper clippings actually covered the broader Twentynine Palms area, and are interesting from that perspective, but did little to help this author with regard to Melody Knolls. There was, however, one last remaining newspaper article, believed to be about 1979, although no actual date was listed, that mentioned that the Navy dropped 32 live 500-pound bombs on the community of Wonder Valley, which is adjacent to Melody Knolls. In fact, the community of Wonder Valley is actually part of the Dale Basin and has since absorbed the once thriving village of Melody Knolls. In truth, many people in the area today have no idea that Melody Knolls was the actual prize of the valley, and that Wonder Valley developed on the other side of the basin. At any rate, the marine base is adjacent to Wonder Valley and the bombing range, which was just over the mountains. It seemed that smoke from the area drifted into Wonder Valley and several A-6 aircraft mistook the drop zone; but because the area was not heavily populated, only a few people even experienced the event. Nevertheless, James and his son Jimmy Wheeler were forced to flee the area in their four-wheel-drive-vehicle in a hurry, and remembered the bombs dropping near them as they fled.

This author had actually heard about a story similar to this, but thought it was an urban legend. Over the years, facts do get taken out of context, like the bombings were actually done during World War II.

Chapter 15

Patriarchs of Melody Knolls

Anno and Jaulene Sanger, an energetic, friendly, and spirited couple, were interviewed on September 28, 2007 at their home in Melody Knolls, California. The village is commonly mistaken as an offshoot of Dale I, which once laid some two miles to the west; Dale I had a short life between 1885 and 1903, before moving southward into the mountains.

The small village of Melody Knolls in 2008

The village of Melody Knolls will not be found on any contemporary map today. It is situated about 50 miles west of Rice (Blythe Junction), the center of No Man’s Land, and was developed in the mid-1950s as an escape from the hustle and bustle of the sprouting L.A. suburbs. An archival search was conducted, which discovered an interesting, but vague, reference to Melody Knolls. Apparently, Wilbur Mayhew conducted research between 1959 and 1962 on the reproduction of the Psammophilous Lizard in the Dale Dry Lake region, and referenced Mr. and Mrs. Don Hambly of Melody Knolls, who helped the researchers. Both Anno and Jaulene made mention of the Hambly's, who owned the gas station and a small staples store in the village when they arrived in 1964. The name of the village also appeared on several state mining and water related documents, thereby giving the Sanger account immediate and verifiable credibility.

The Melody Knolls military monument with Dale Dry Lake in the background in 2008.

According to Anno, the community of Wonder Valley annexed Melody Knolls in the early 1990s; although, the few remaining villagers on the southern part of the valley resisted. Little by little, many of the old timers within the village died; in fact, only a few inhabitants remain today who can give an accurate account of Melody Knolls and the surrounding area. Their story is perhaps the only written text of life in the once thriving desert community of Melody Knolls.

Anno and Jaulene were living in Covina, California before they bought their first cabin in 1964; from 1964 until Anno took early retirement in 1974, the young couple considered themselves weekenders. Anno worked in the mobile home service industry, until he finally moved to Melody Knolls. He also did well in the stock market, which allowed him the opportunity to take early retirement at age 45.

Anno and Jaulene Sanger in the 1960's (Sanger photograph)

Upon reflection, he considered himself a hard worker who did the right things in life; many of the same values he first learned in Nebraska. Anno served in the army during World War II and after returning to Nebraska, he married Jaulene, started a Culligan water softening business, and worked the summer months on the farms near his hometown of Frankland. After settling in, he was called up for the Korean War where he did another tour of duty. He remembered having ten days to report, which resulted in the loss of his business; upon his returned he decided to leave Franklin and move to the golden state of California, where he heard there were more opportunities for a hard working man. The young couple moved to the Covina area, where they both worked and raised a family together.

Their first encounter with Melody Knolls almost did not occur. Anno was reluctant to respond to their friends, Harry and Lee Erwin, who asked them repeatedly to come out and spend a weekend at their home. At the time, the desert did not seem appealing and he thought they were just trying to sell them some property in the area. After several refusals, Anno agreed to their requests in the hope to get them to stop asking. Harry and Lee had a home east of the old gas station.

Anno and Jaulene fell in love with the village and the surrounding area immediately. Within months, they bought their first cabin with five acres of desert wilderness; and by late 1964 weekend trips became common.

Trips into the surrounding mountains, valleys, mines, springs, and ruins became an obsession. Unlike many trekkers, Anno and Jaulene both agreed they would only take rocks, often leaving the ruins as they found them; it saddened them greatly to have watched so many of the ruins destroyed by vandals seeking the thrill of destruction.

By 1974, their love for the desert helped them ultimately decide to retire in Melody Knolls and leave big city life forever, which was primarily due to Anno’s work ethic, ability to save, and invest in the stock market.

However, within the first year, Anno got bored, so he started to take odd jobs, and little by little, the requests and jobs kept coming in. He did, however, remain picky, only doing those jobs he wanted to do. First and foremost, if the person was not friendly, he would not accept the work. He was proud that he never really charged his friends and neighbors more than $5 an hour; to him relationships were more important than the money he earned repairing homes and building additions. Anno also did well buying fixer-up properties and or vacant land, and turning them for a substantial profit.

Even in 1964, Melody Knolls was a small village, boasting only about 15 homes. Little has changed, except most of the old-timers that Anno and Jaulene knew have since moved away or died off. At any given time, about half the village were weekenders and the other half eked out a modest existence.

The Snake Man of Melody Knolls (Sanger photograph)

Up until the last decade or so, Anno and Jaulene were the youngest couple in the village. For several decades, they enjoyed community potlucks, breakfasts, and porch drinking parties. Anno recalled several weekends where the men would drink a shot of whisky for each car that drove by the old county road, now called State Highway 62. He affectionately recollected becoming upset when as few as two cars drove by, only allowing him two shots; however, later on the group had to stop this fun practice, because Highway 62 would eventually become crowded on holiday weekends with as many as 500 cars in a single hour. To everyone's surprise, Highway 62 became a popular route for travelers to the Colorado River in the 1980s and 1990s, especially on weekends and holidays.

After moving permanently to Melody Knolls, regular morning coffee gatherings became a local custom. The villagers met each morning about 10:00 am to discuss current topics of interest; little was missed, and everyone had a say. Each of the homes in the village had a single linking phone line for contacting one another, and if someone did not show up for coffee, a phone call or nock on the door often followed. Everyone in the village took an interest in the other villager's welfare and watched out for each other.

Two of the more familiar faces were Don and Blanch Hambly, who owned the Melody Knolls gas station and staple store. Don was perhaps the friendliest man Anno ever met; he was known for helping complete strangers. It did not matter to Don, who would drive out deep into No Man's Land to help a traveler that was stranded in the sand or just ran out of gas. The Hambly's sold the store in the mid 1970s to Al Crain, who added onto the building and built a large garage in the rear. Crain eventually sold the business to Dave Wisner in the early 1980s; however, later that decade he had lost his license to sell gasoline, which was perhaps the end of this once prospering business. No more food was stocked after the Hambly's sold out, Crain decided to sell alcohol instead. The old Melody Knolls gas station operated as a bar until it closed in 2005, when it was said to have been closed by the San Bernardino County Health Department. The structures still exist today and are in relatively good shape.

When operating, the Melody Knolls gas station was a profitable venture. Anno remembered that Al Crain had emphysema; so he would often take in the weekend deposits to the bank in Twentynine Palms for him. To his surprise, he recalled that these deposits often ranged between $5,000 and $6,000. Gas was always much higher at the Knolls than in town, as much as a dollar a gallon more. Making the business even more profitable, Crain had his own gas carrier. It was rumored that Crain was using bootlegged gas, which could be purchased much cheaper than normal. Local legend has it that Craine was not on the up and up, that perhaps something illegal was going on, but nothing was ever proved. On weekend holidays, the business could have easily made a profit of $5,000 to $6,000; however, these amounts continued even when the weekend was slow, which was often the case. In time, everyone just surmised that Craine was laundering money because there was no way the business could make a gross profit of $150,000 a year with such a meager amount of activity.

Anno on the old road to New Dale (Sanger photograph)

To the disbelief of many, the small village also had a local water consortium, known as Melody Knolls Water. The organization would eventually change its name to the Association of Well Owners, but to Anno's knowledge, a name change was never recorded on the deed. Thus, the well consortium may still be officially recorded as Melody Knolls Water. In spite of the community's meager existence, it has maintained a unified non-profit water consortium for over 50 years. There are still fifteen board members, presumably set up to allow one board member for each household in the village. Little by little, many of the long time residents died off, leaving Anno to manage the water consortium; he is the current well manager today, while his wife is treasurer. Some of the original board members include Marian “Lucky” Stark, Don Hambly, Steve Katanian, Cary and Donna Crane and Roland McKandrew.

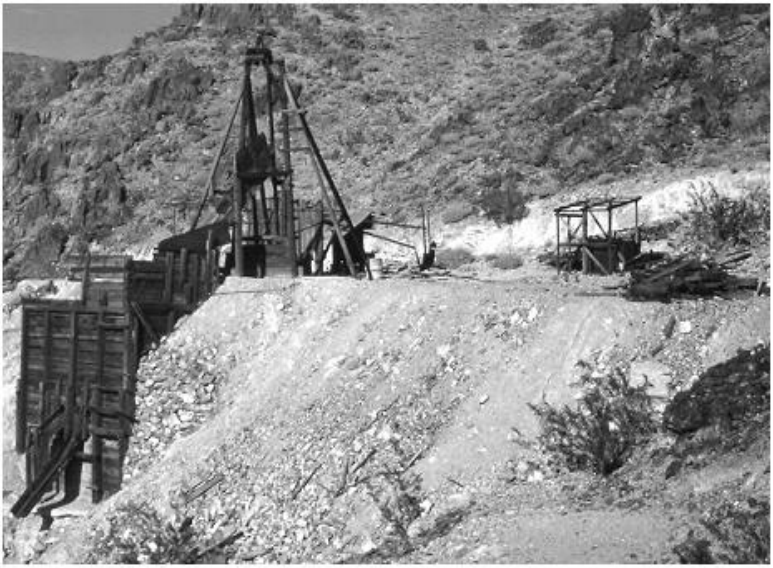
Looking at Dale Dry Lake from Lorman mine ruins in the 1960’s (Sanger photograph)

Roland McKandrew, one of the areas more unique fellows, was also known as the snake man of Melody Knolls. Roland was a retired serviceman who first served in the Army Air Corps, and eventually retired from the Air Force after it became an independent branch of the military. He much preferred the company of snakes to people, and as the years went on, he became even more reclusive. Most of the people about Melody Knolls liked Roland, but they did not like the idea he had so many snakes about his home. When most everyone saw a sidewinder rattle snake, they shot it, something Roland held against many of the areas residence.

Roland sold many of his reptiles to a popular traveling snake show, which performed throughout the state. To find snakes for the traveling show, Roland would often hike into the Sheephole and Pinto mountains, which surrounded the sparse village. He found most of his snakes in the mountains, but people in the area also knew of his reputation and would bring some to him from time to time.

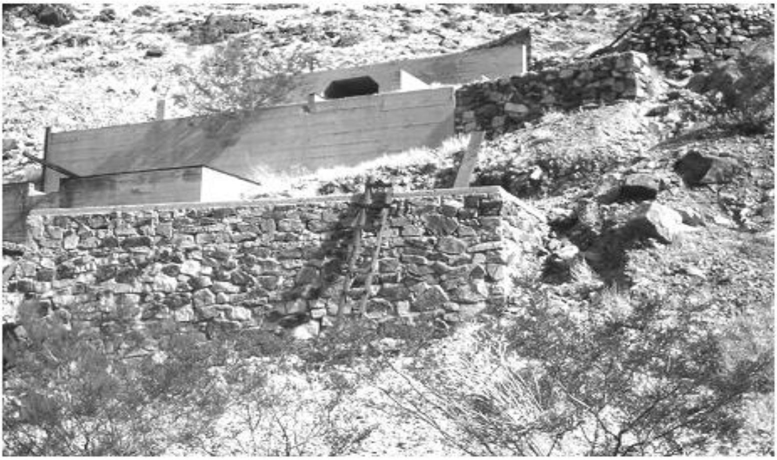
Anno and Roland once took a hiking trip into the Sheephole Mountains where they discovered the remains of a Big Horn Sheep that had gone into a cave and died. Anno recalled the skeleton remains, which had an incredibly large set of horns. Both men agreed the animal perhaps died of natural causes, as there appeared to be no major injuries to the bones.

Looking at Dale Dry Lake from Lorman mine ruins in the 1960's (Sanger photograph)



Lorman mine ruins in the 1960's (Sanger photograph)

Everyone in the village, in spite of his snakes, thought a great deal of Roland. Therefore, the ending of his life came as an unhappy shock to everyone. Someone brought him a Pacific rattlesnake that he subsequently tried to train. The snake attacked Roland, which required a stay in the Palm Springs Hospital. The Pacific rattlesnake has a unique venom that attacks the central nervous system, often causes blood clots, and kills tissue surrounding the bite; among other related physical problems. Roland survived; however, he was never the same afterwards. His mental and physical abilities diminished and became noticeable to everyone who knew him.



Rose of Peru mine ruins in the 1960's (Sanger photograph)

Both Anno and Jaulene fondly remembered the snake man of Melody Knolls, Roland McKandrew. Before his snakebite accident, he was always a good neighbor, an avid reader, and a fine dowser. Roland eventually died in the early 1990s, though he will always be remembered for his extraordinary, but eccentric, hobby.

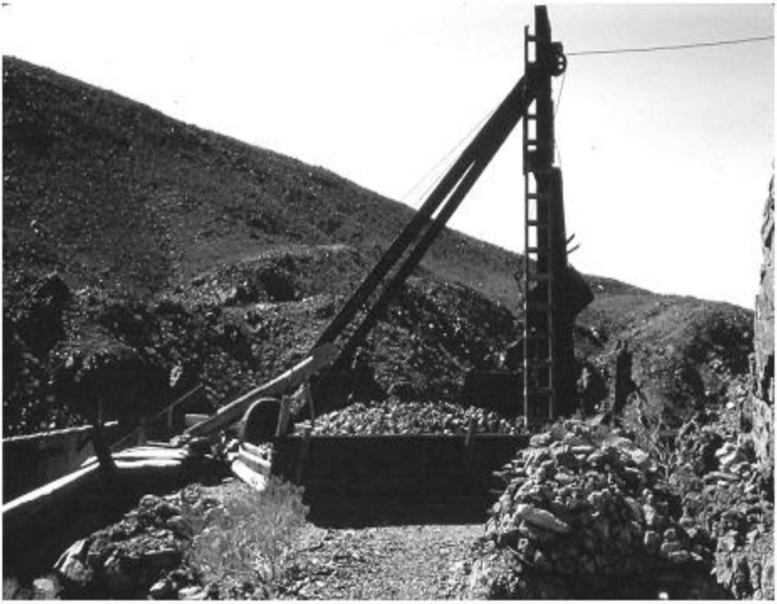
There was another interesting character worth mentioning; Anno and Jaulene jokingly remember a woman named Shirley Wade, who was referred to as "dirty Sally" or the "village drunk. " Anno recalled that on numerous occasions he would be called to take her off the highway, where she would be roaming stark naked, yelling at anyone and everyone who drove by. Anno committed to memory that she had a remarkable body for an elderly drunk, which was probably due to her former prowess as a dancer. Wade was also a prominent piano player, who proudly displayed her grand piano, which was stored by the owner of the Melody Knolls gas station. No one knows for certain, but Wade eventually claimed that someone took her piano, although other accounts claim she actually sold it. In any case, because of her condition, no one took her seriously.

Los Angeles mine ruins in the 1960's (Sanger photograph)

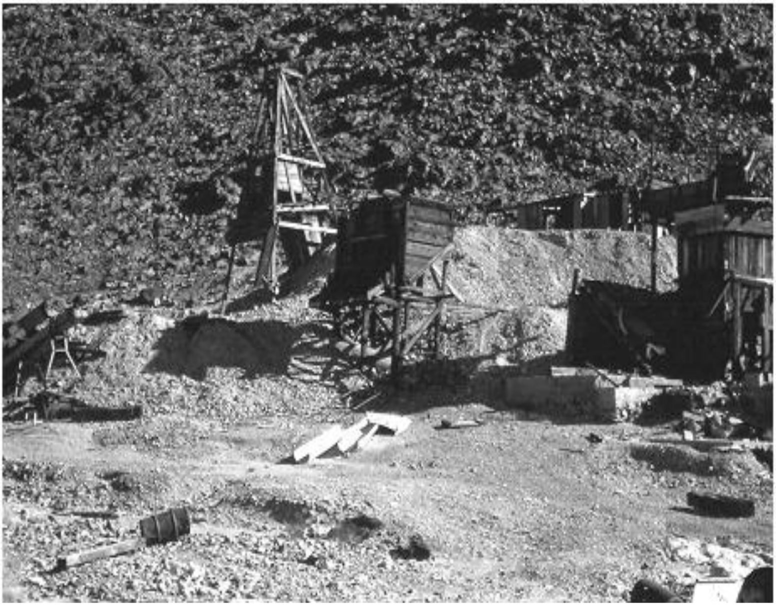
Golden Egg Min ruins in the 1960's (Sanger photograph)

Some of the villagers came to rest, while others considered themselves modern day explorers. Before vandals destroyed most of the ruins, Anno and Jaulene often explored old stamp mill sites, Frank Sabathe's old stage and freight depot, and the old whisky distillery, among other locations.

Lorman mine ruins in the 1960's (Sanger photograph)

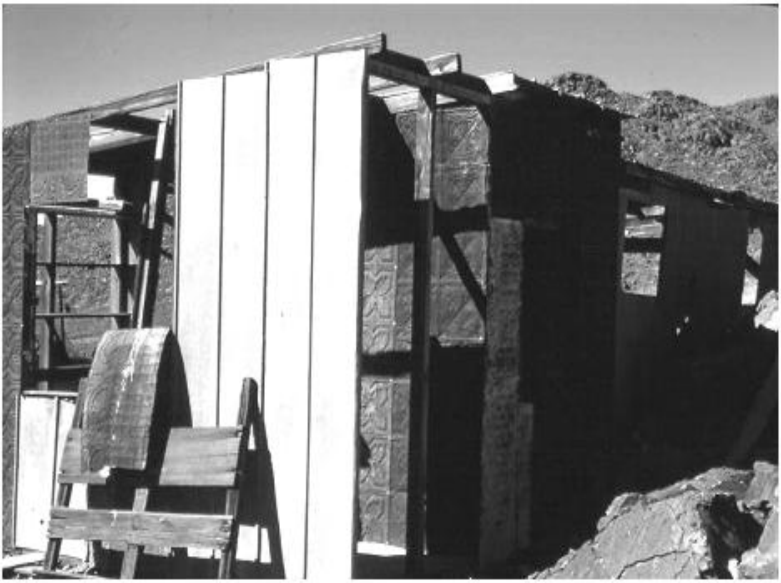


Golden Egg mine ruins in the 1960's (Sanger photograph)

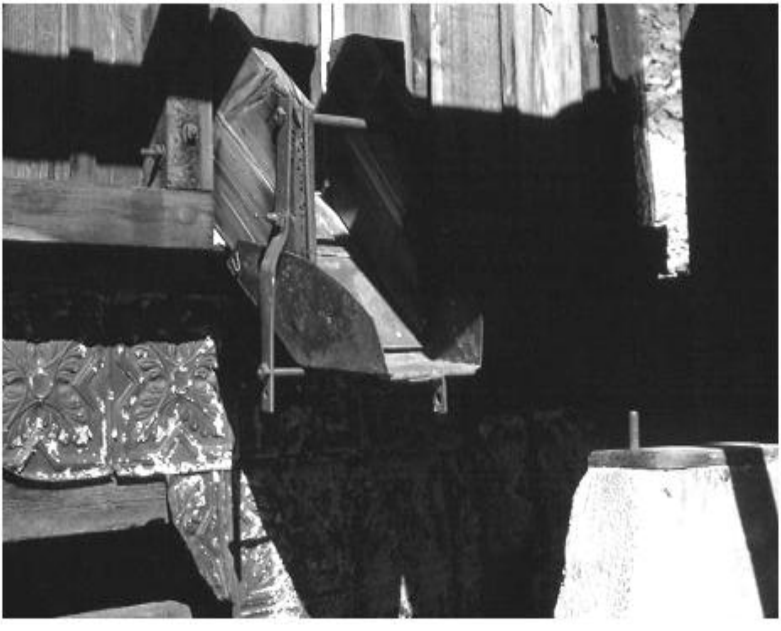


Golden Rod mine ruins in the 1960's (Sanger photograph)

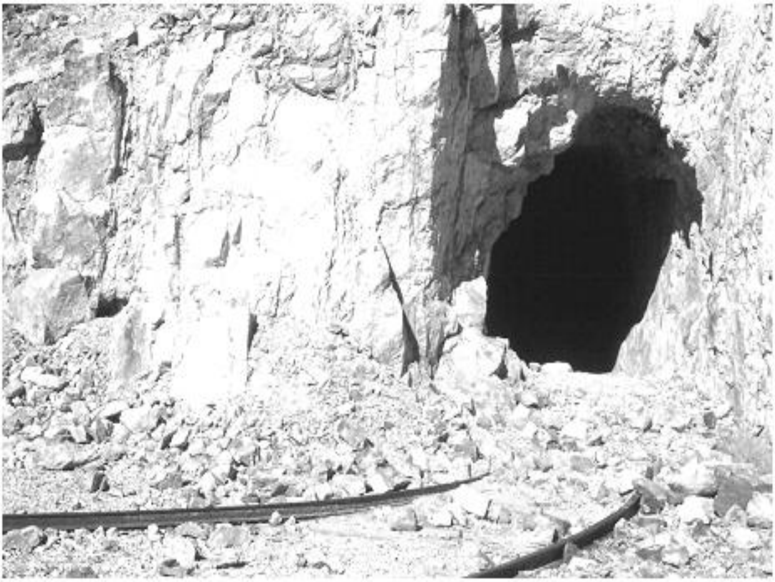
Golden Egg mine ruins in the 1960's (Sanger photograph)



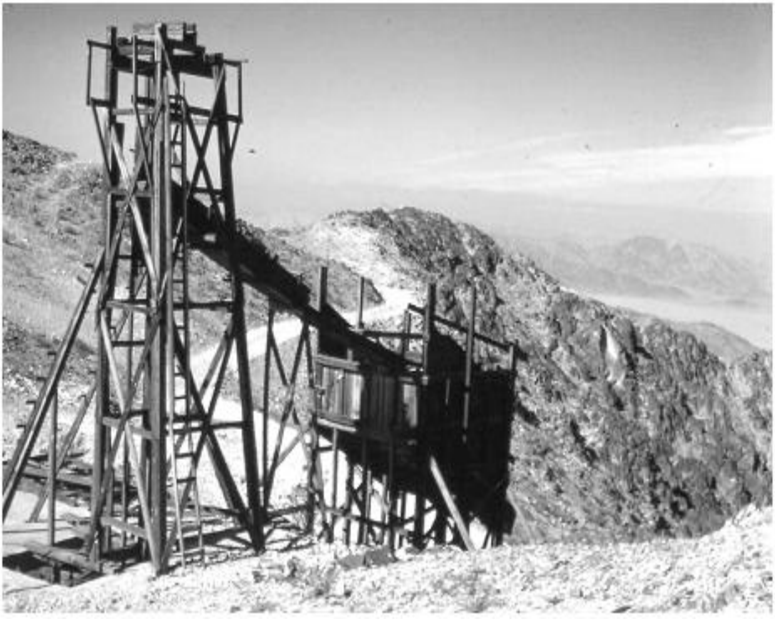
Golden Rod mine ruins in the 1960's (Sanger photograph)



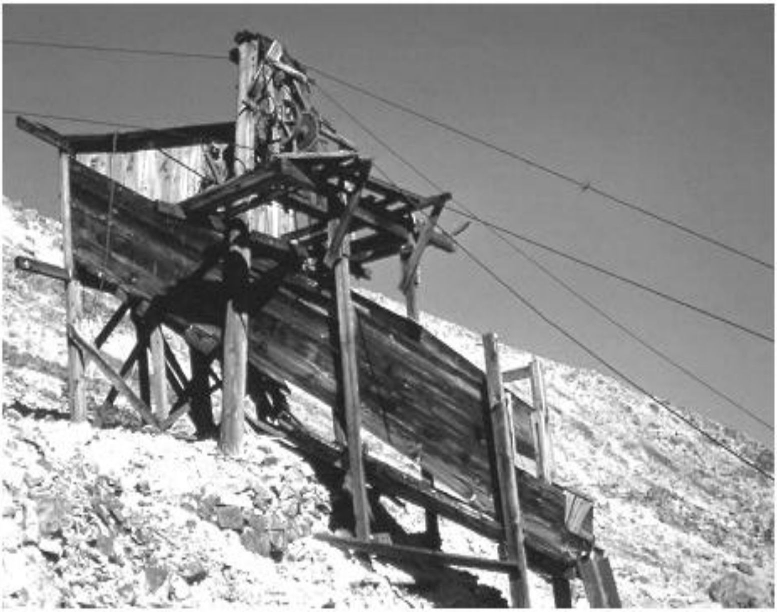
Golden Rod mine ruins in the 1960's (Sanger photograph)



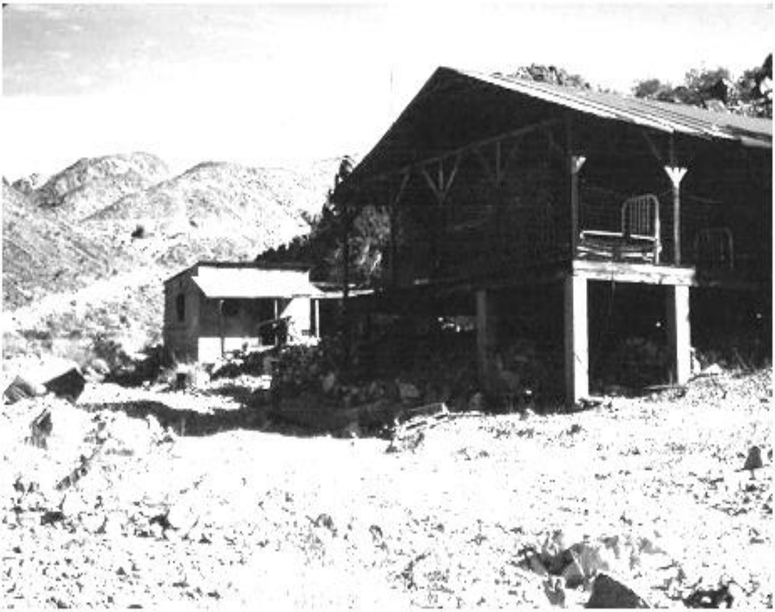
Ivanhoe mine tunnel in the 1960's (Sanger photograph)



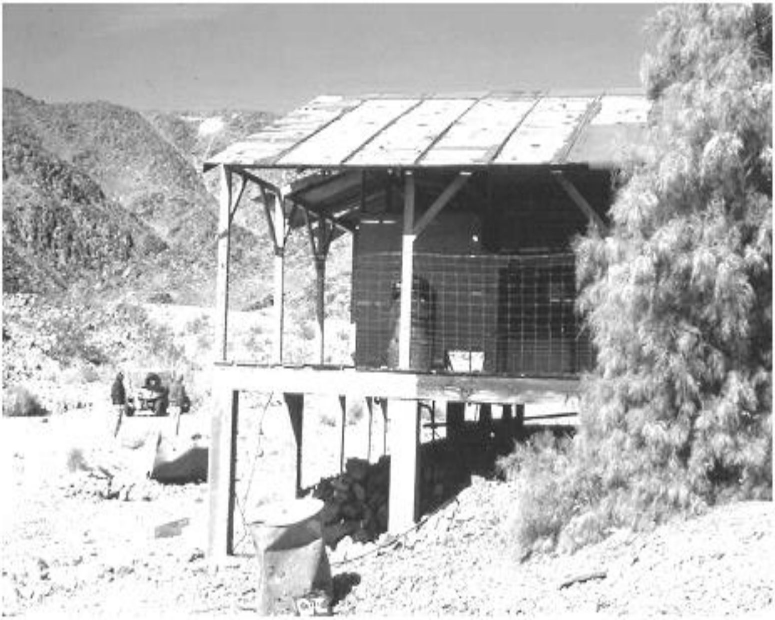
Ivanhoe mine ruins in the 1960's (Sanger photograph)



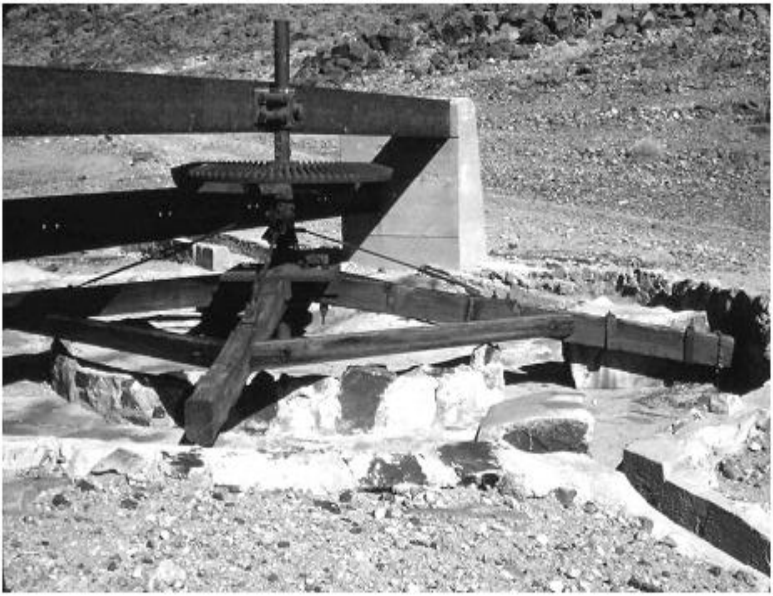
Ivanhoe mine ruins in the 1960's (Sanger photograph)



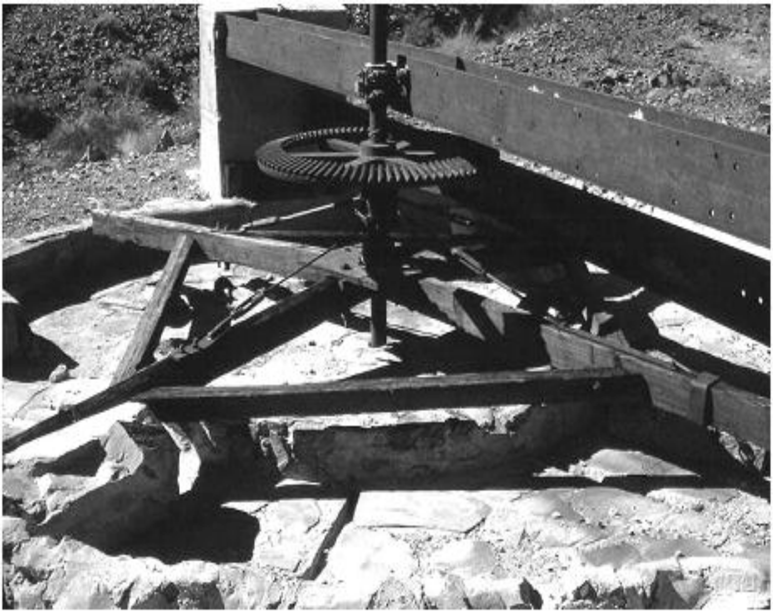
Gold Rose mine ruins in the 1960's (Sanger photograph)



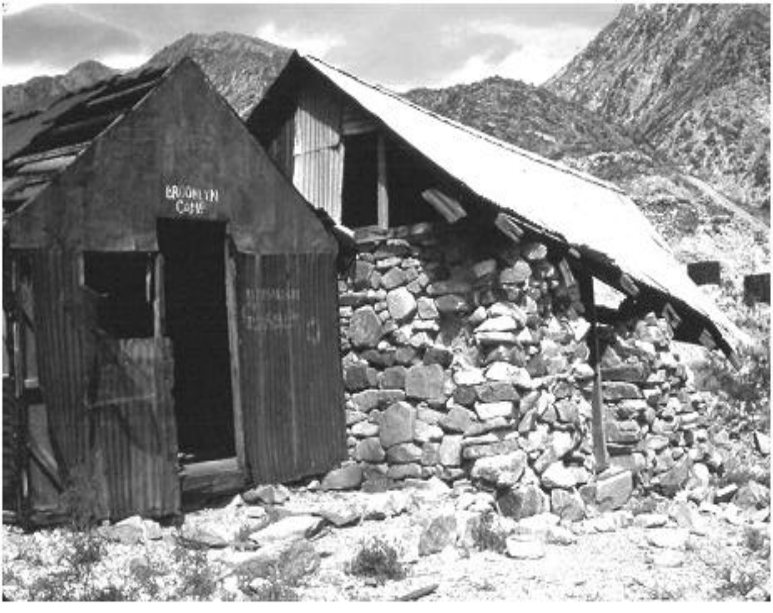
Gold Rose mine ruins in the 1960's (Sanger photograph)



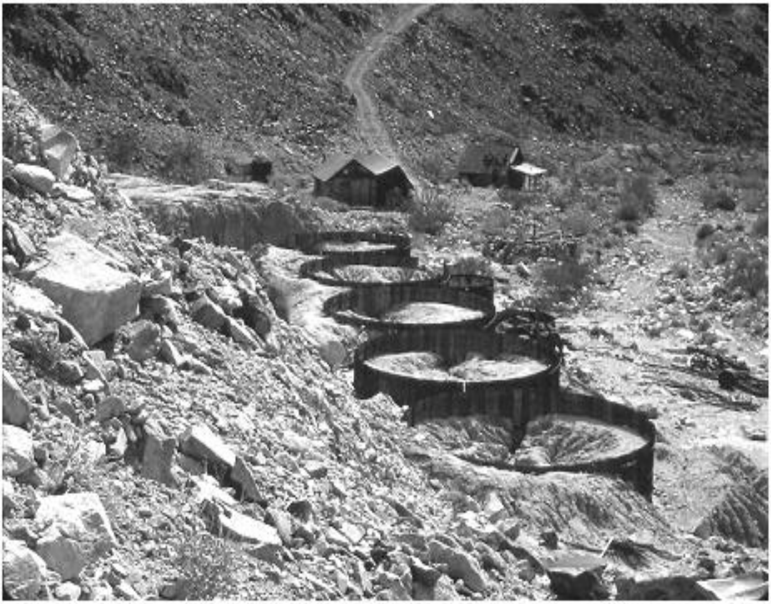
Gold Rose mine ruins in the 1960's (Sanger photograph)



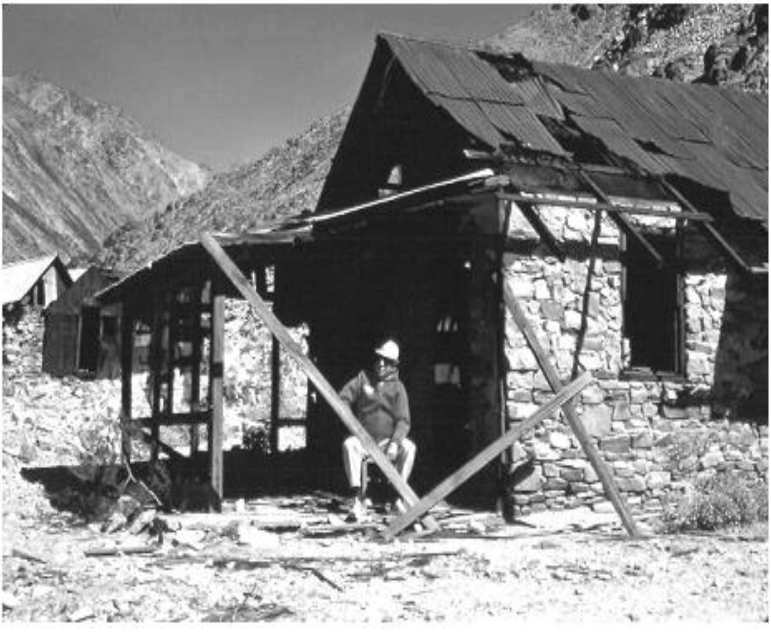
Gold Rose mine ruins in the 1960's (Sanger photograph)



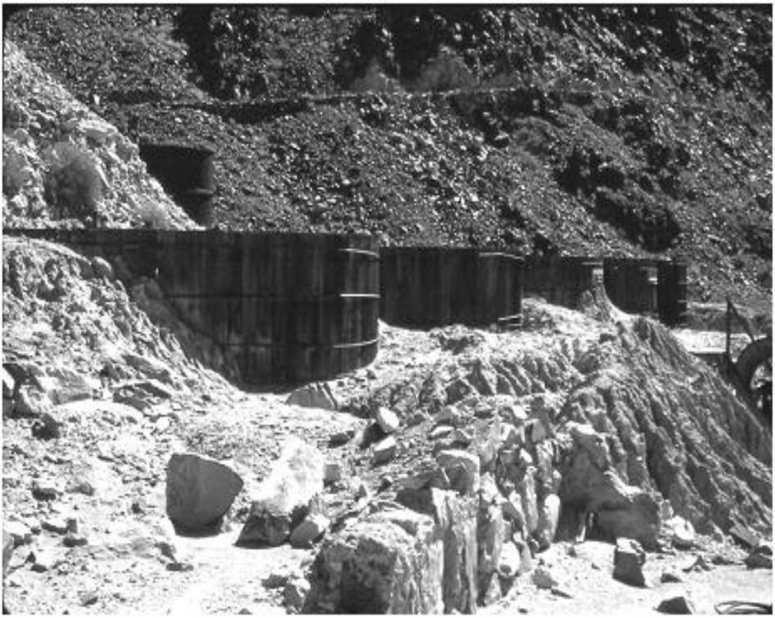
Brooklyn mine ruins in the 1960's (Sanger photographs)



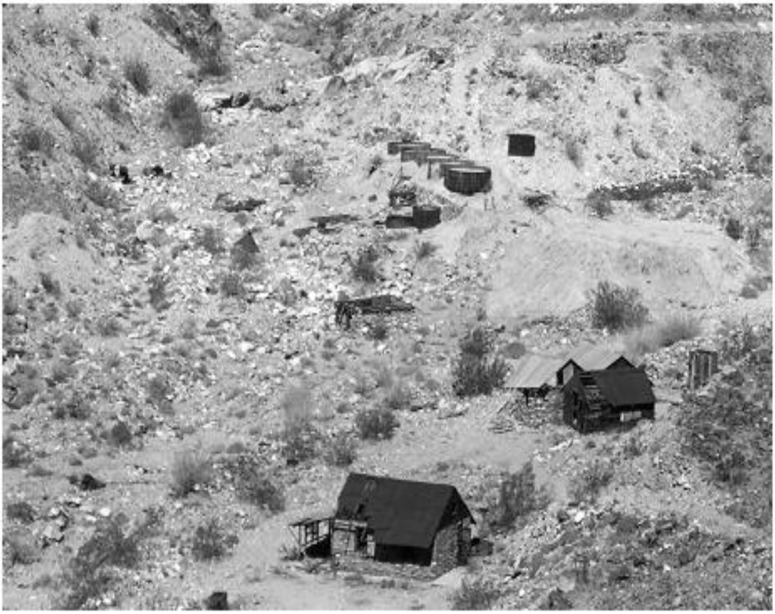
Brooklyn mine ruins in the 1960's (Sanger photographs)



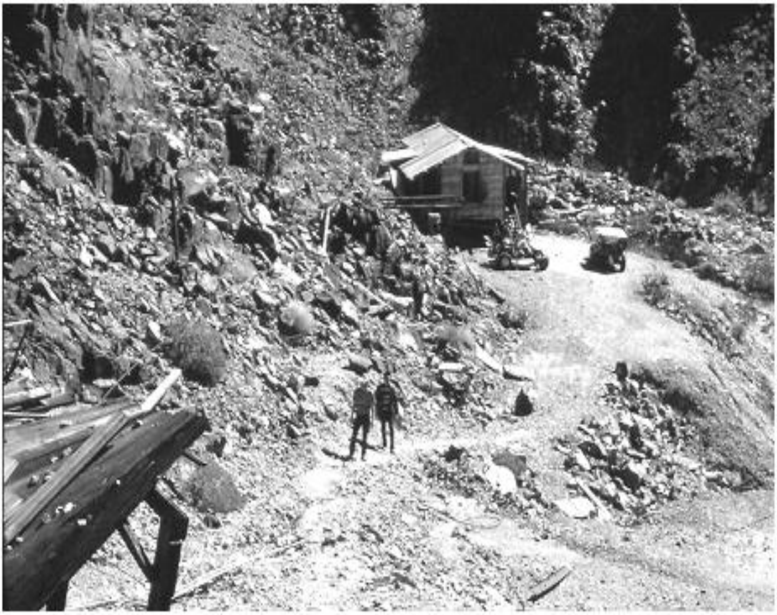
Brooklyn mine ruins in the 1960's (Sanger photographs)



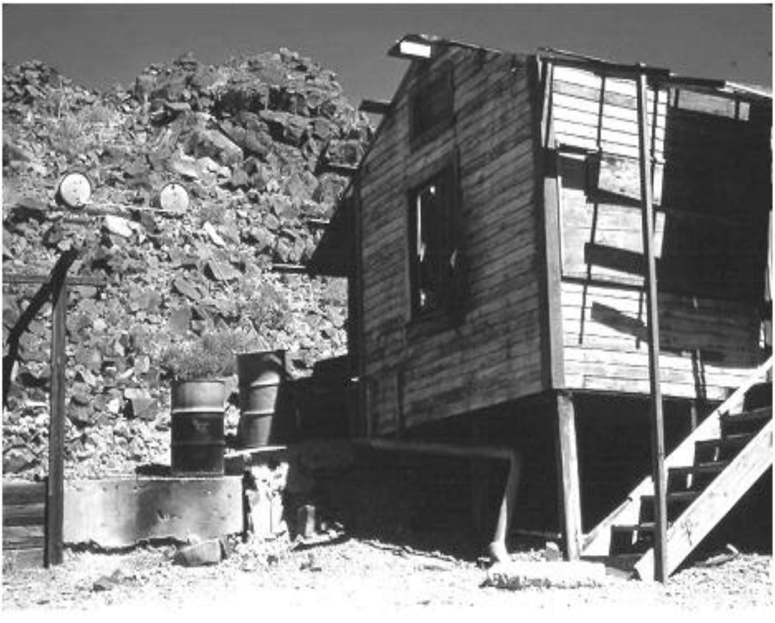
Brooklyn mine ruins in the 1960's (Sanger photographs)



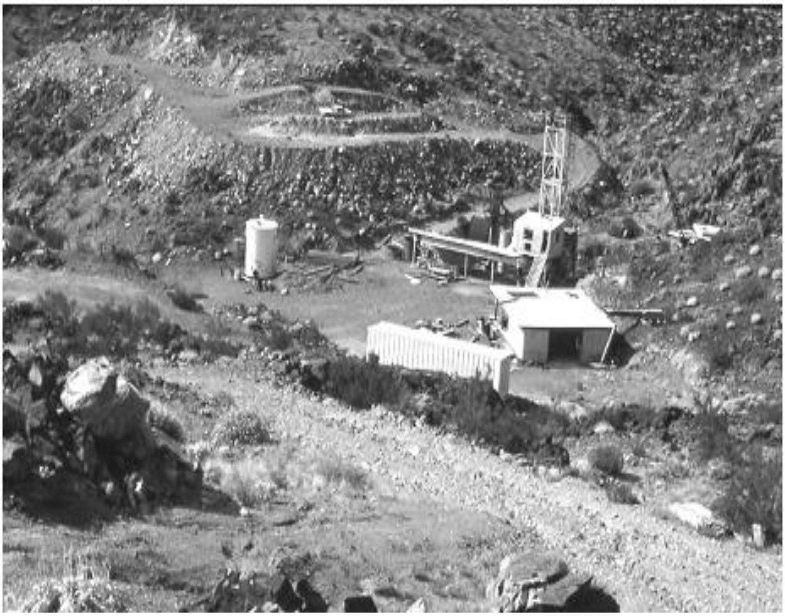
Brooklyn mine ruins in the 1960s (Sanger photographs)



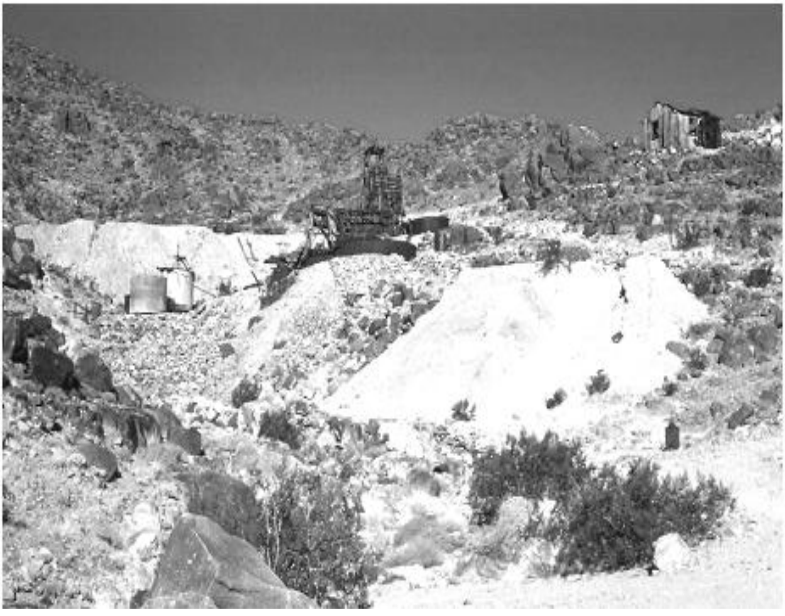
Gold Standard mine ruins in the 1960's (Sanger photograph)



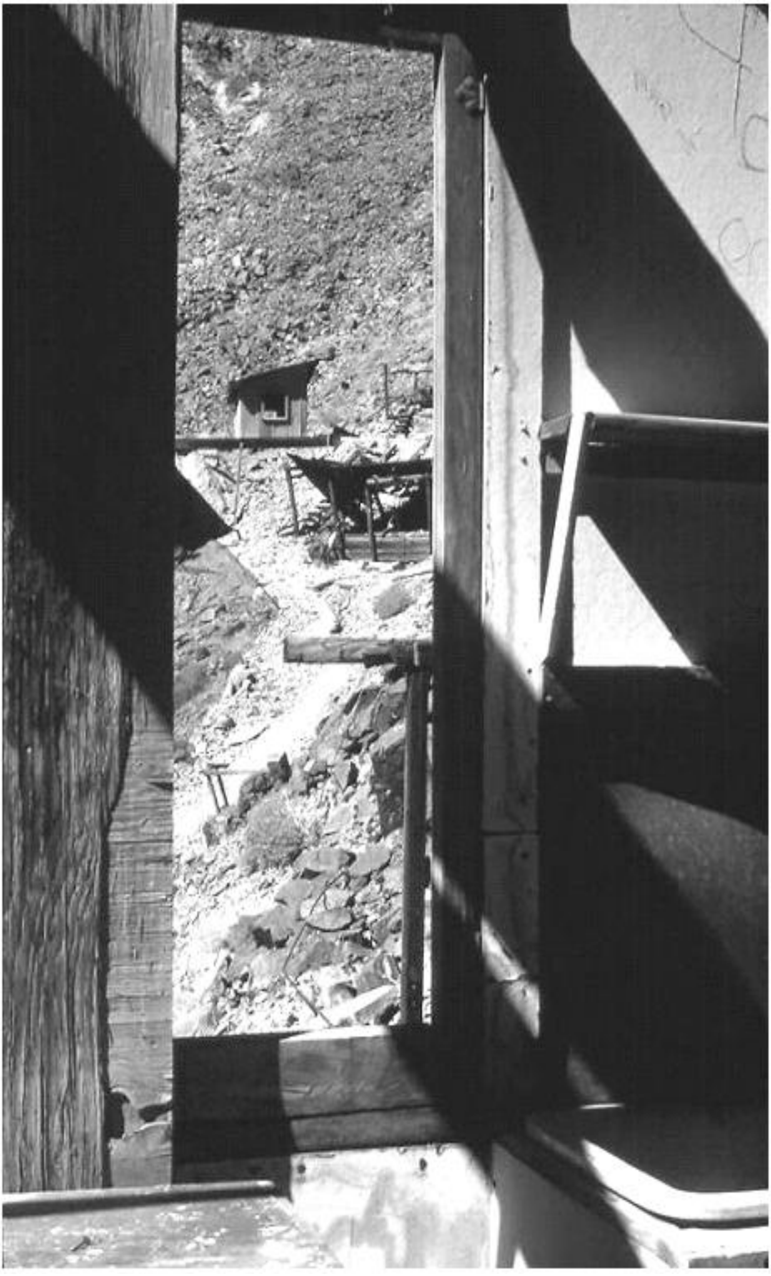
Gold Standard mine ruins in the 1960s (Sanger photograph)



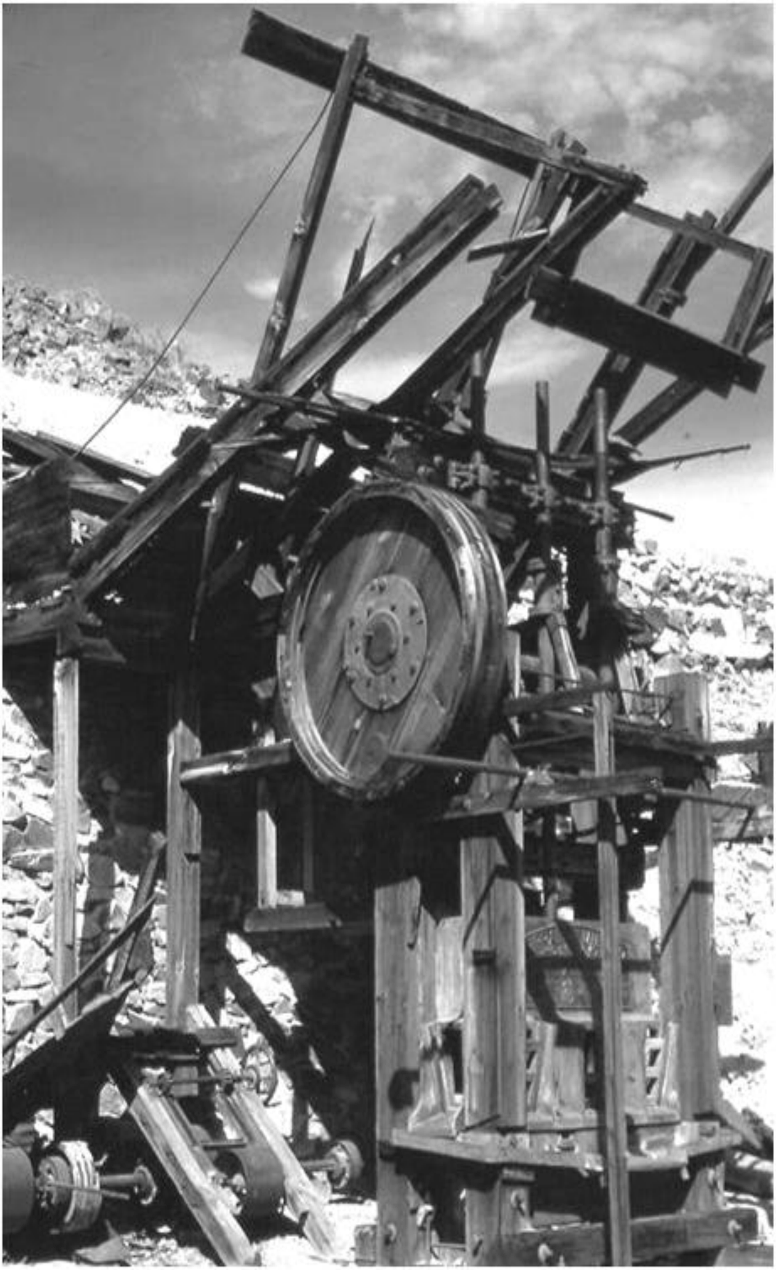
Sunrise mine in the 1960s (Sanger photograph)



Virginia Dale mine ruins in the 1960s (Sanger photograph)



Gold Standard mine ruins in the 1960s (Sanger photograph)



Los Angeles mine ruins in the 1960s (Sanger photograph)

Virginia Dale mine ruins from above in the 1960s (Sanger photograph)

One particular site they visited, especially during the summer months, was a natural spring located at the end of the Coxcomb Mountains to the east of Melody Knolls. In the mid 1960s, it was commonly known that traveling a dirt path, off the old county road, could easily lead to the base of the mountain; and a short hike up the mountain would lead to a large spring surrounded by rocks on a ledge. They remember its chilly water was a welcome reprieve during the extreme summer heat, making the experience a memorable one.

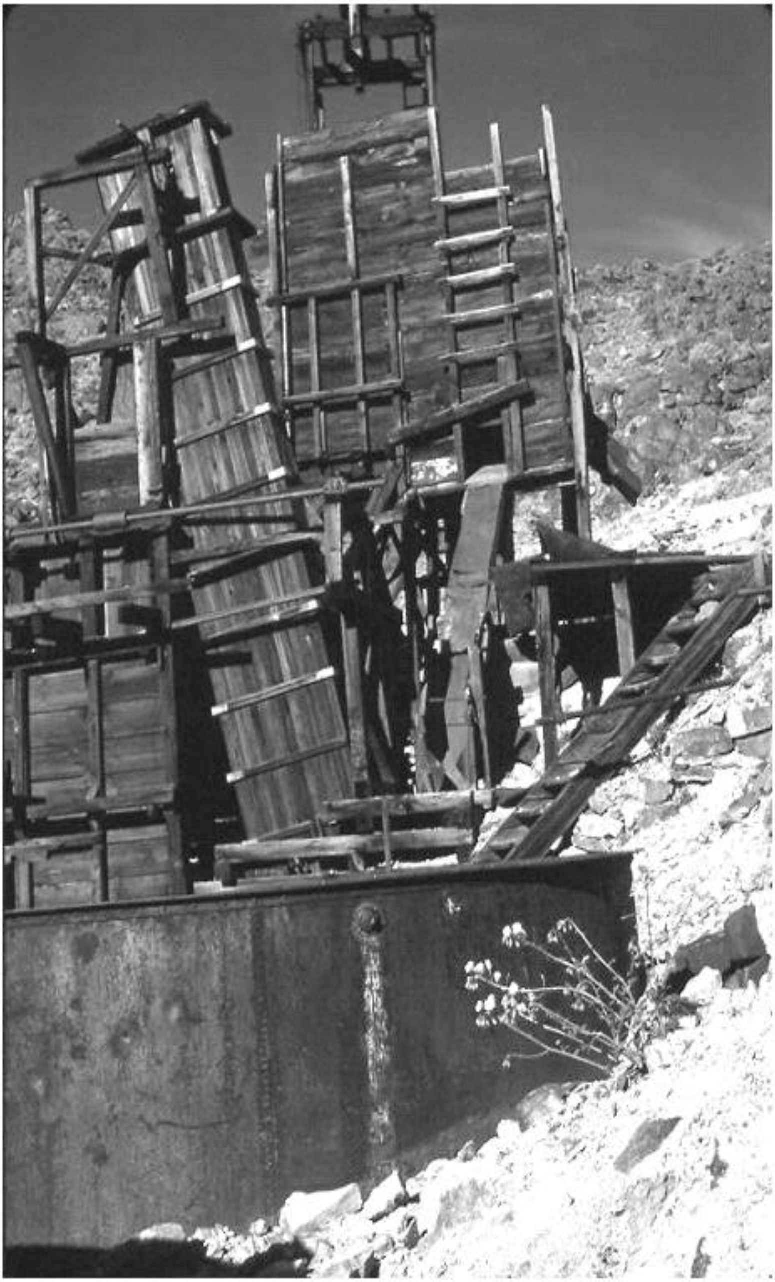
In time, however, the BLM closed the trail and access to the area. During that era, it was common knowledge that vandals frequented the vicinity, so the government decided to close the natural spring in order to protect it.

During this early era, roads going into the Dale Mining District were well maintained, which Anno thinks might have been a mistake. With easy access came vandals, who destroyed most of the district’s structures in Dale II, Dale III, and the Supply and Brooklyn mines, among other mining communities, including the legendary bunkhouse, which housed the miners in the area. In an angry tone, Anno referred to these vandals as “Hippies”; with little doubt, a sense of anger over the destruction of the area ruins was still held by Anno.

Dale mine ruins at the base of the Pinto Mountains in the 1960s (Sanger photograph)

Anno reminisced one incident where they found a motorcycle along Gold Crown road, which is the main road entering the Dale Mining area in the mountains to the south. In the mid 1970s, he was traveling up to the mining district when he saw a partially buried motorcycle. Anno took down the license number and reported it to the sheriff’s department, which discovered the bike had been stolen from Colorado in the 1960s.

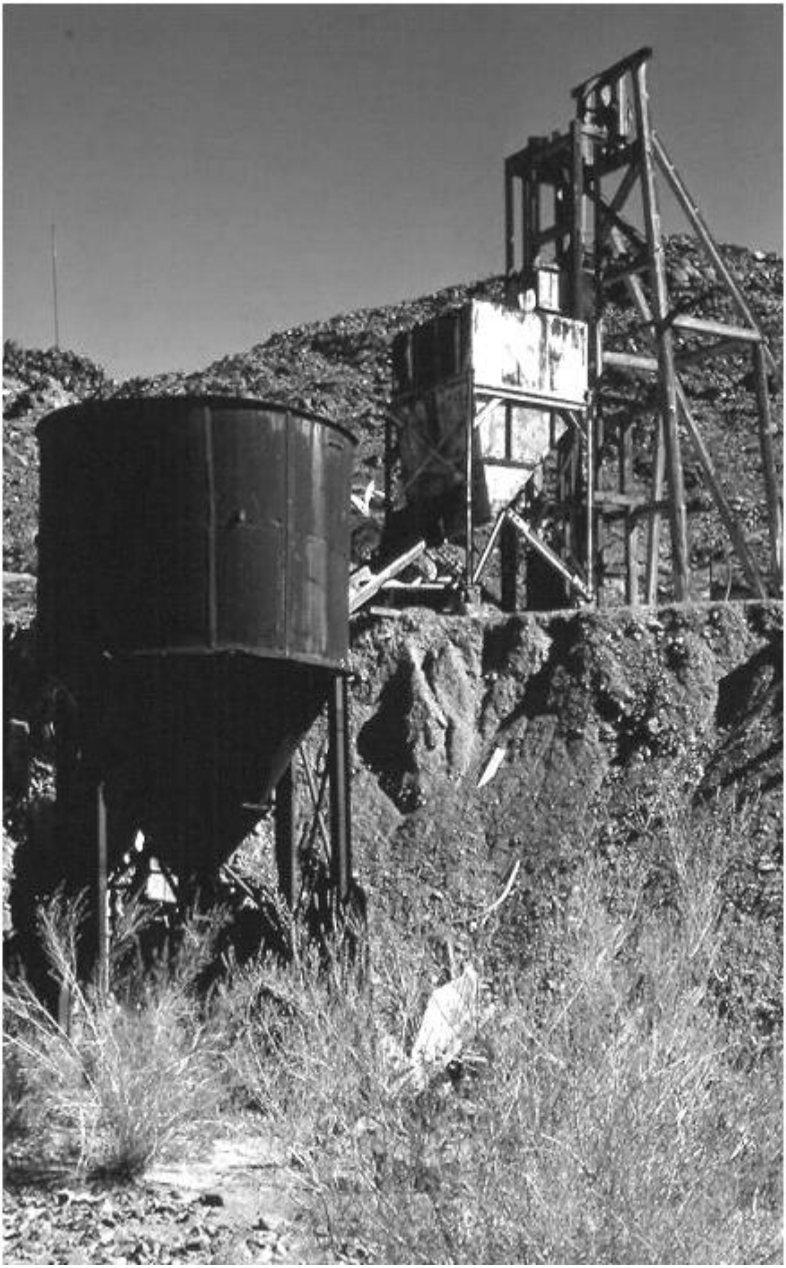
In time, it became known that a Marine from the Twentynine Palms base stole the motorcycle on leave and took it up into the Dale Mining District where it got stuck and it was just left. Anno once tried to pull it out, but without the proper tools and help he just left it, and to his knowledge it is still buried along Gold Crown road to this day.



Virginia Dale mine ruins in the 1960s (Sanger photograph)

Dale mine ruins at the base of the Pinto Mountains in the 1960s (Sanger photograph)

Dale mine ruins at the base of the Pinto Mountains in the 1960s (Sanger photograph)



Sunrise mine in the 1960s (Sanger photograph)

Frank Sabathe's old Dale stage and freight depot, located almost in the center of the valley, was a special place for Anno and Jaulene. According to local legend, Dale I grew out of the mining success in the area, and out of this growth, Frank Sabathe developed a freight hauling business that eventually included a stage line. The ruins of this late 19th century depot are located on Chadwick road, just west of Dale Dry Lake. After Frank Sabathe left the area about 1916, not much else is known about the site; that was until an account that Dave and Anna Post lived there during the 1930s.

Dale Dry Lake view from Highway 62, near Iron Age Road

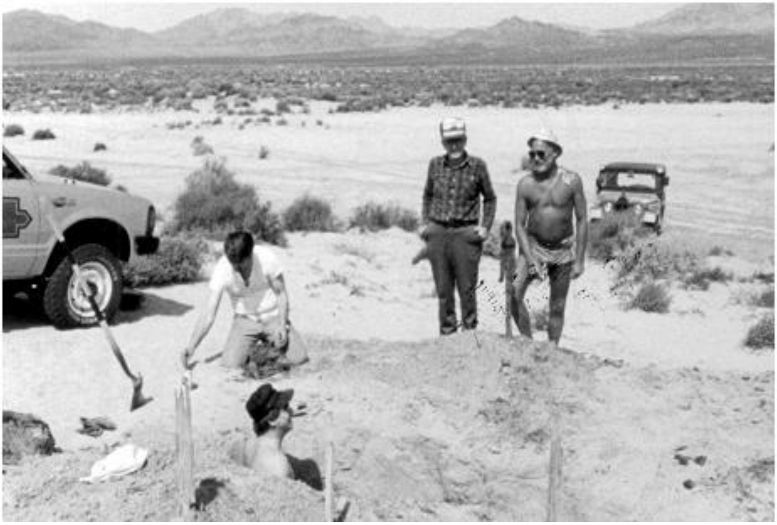
According to Anno and Jaulene, the depot became a prosperous hog farm during World War II; yet it is not known if the Post's owned it during that time, or if someone else worked the farm. By the mid 1960s the site had been untouched and was still in a good condition. There was an adobe building, and the remains of a hog farm were still visible. According to Jaulene, who visited the ruins quite often, she could easily find pig bones that had been put into small heaps. Stalls, pens, and feeding troughs were still visible in those days. Legend had it that the owners of the hog farm got their feed from the Twentynine Palms Air Academy [Condor field]; daily pick-ups of unused food were fed to the hogs. The hog farm remained profitable until the end of the war and with the closure of the base came the end to the last chapter of Frank Sabathe's depot.

Ken and Donna Doe's campsite near Dale Dry Lake
(Sanger photograph)

There was another interesting fellow who frequented Melody Knolls from time to time; everyone knew him only as Karl Schapel. He became sort of a legend in the area, and had a mine called Golden Egg mine, which he protected with his shotgun. People generally knew Schapel did not allow strangers on his claim and would shoot his gun as a warning to anyone he did not recognize. Anno got to know Schapel over time and eventually was invited up to his cabin, which was at the front of his mine. After fixing an old generator at the mine, Anno could go up to Schapel's place anytime he wanted. Ultimately, Schapel even invited Anno and Jaulene to enter it, which was a rare treat in those days.

Schapel was also famous for another reason. Apparently, he had a propane gas explosion at his cabin, after which he was found wondering the desert, disorientated and partly burned. While he was recovering in the hospital, local Marines started a fundraising campaign to rebuild his home. Shortly after his return from the hospital, Schapel was greeted with over 40 Marine representatives, one from each state, who rebuilt his home in one day. Schapel died in the late 1970s, and is affectionately remembered by Anno and Jaulene as a quiet man who distrusted people he did not know.

Eventually, Anno and Jaulene became close friends with Ken and Donna Doe, who owned *Treasure Magazine* and frequented the area in search of ideas for their publication. Ken and Donna lived in Twentynine Palms and built the office for their magazine in town, which is now located in the Ambulance building on Adobe Road. The couple also had a home in Westlake and in Palm Springs.

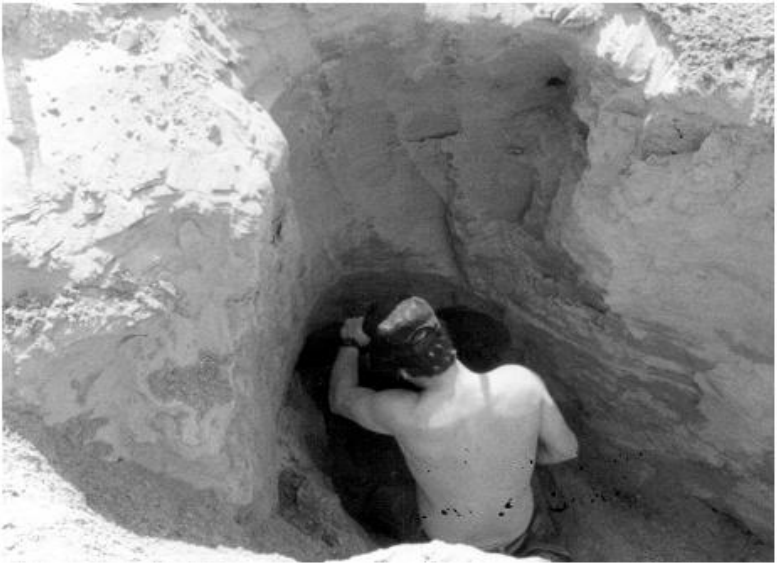


Archeological dig for Herb Ames pumping station
(Sanger photograph)

Ken had a four-wheel drive camper, which he regularly used in his travels. Anno warmheartedly remembered one instance with Ken at Dale Dry Lake. It seemed ken would often get free metal detectors, and would go out trying to find artifacts, whereupon he discovered a large object in the dunes, just south of Dale Dry Lake; and thought perhaps that it might be the legendary pumping station for the mines that Herb Ames built in 1901, or so. Ken and his editor Jim Williams set up camp at the site and started an archeological dig, and after reaching a depth of over seven feet, they discovered a ruin of a pumping station. When Anno arrived on the site, he immediately warned Jim to get out of the hole until the wall could be reinforced. Anno was concerned that the men were digging in a soft-sanded area and that without any protection the wall could easily come down on Jim, perhaps killing him.

The pumping station had significant importance to the area. Frank Sabathe reluctantly agreed to allow Herb Ames to build a pumping station and pipeline into the Pinto Mountains to the south in 1901. By 1903, the project was completed and the Town of Dale I slowly moved into the mountains, thereby ending the first town on the valley floor.

No firm conclusion was ever determined, but Anno believed that Ken Doe did in fact discover the ruins of the original pumping station. One of the biggest clues was a large pipe that went the direction of the Pinto Mountain. With the help of their metal detector, the pipe was followed under the now State Highway 62 and well into the mountain range.



Jim Williams digging at Herb Ames original pumping station in 1984 (Sanger photograph)

With Ken's help, Anno also discovered the site of Burt's Well, the first well in the valley, about 1883, or so. Burt's Well eventually led to the development of the Dale Mining District, and Dale I. In the 1960s, the well location was noticeable in an open wash, southeast of Melody Knolls. Anno could walk right up to the hand dug well, which had railroad ties surrounding it. Anno believed the ties actually covered the well, but over time, people moved them to look down into it. Several hundred feet from the well were several tanks that were presumably used to store water for weary travelers; and because the area was never maintained, rainwater from the nearby mountains eventually eroded the wash and filled the once important well.

Another sad notation to Ken and Donna Doe – Anno and Jaulene believed Donna died of cancer at age 42 and Ken died several years later at age 44 of pancreatic cancer. Their two children sold *Treasure Magazine* and it was eventually moved elsewhere.

Ken and Donna Doe are affectionately remembered and had a lasting impact on Anno. It was Ken's interest in rocks, which helped Anno truly understand the hobby of rock collecting; and in time, he started attending rock shows and eventually became the president of the gem and mineral society in Twentynine Palms, a position he held for two years.

The area surrounding Melody Knolls was, for a time, very fertile and green, especially when compared to today. During the 1950s and 1960s, it was common to see Basque sheepherders coming into the area to graze their animals on federal lands; however, for some unknown reason this welcomed practice eventually stopped; perhaps because the area became less fertile? The once fields of flowers everyone enjoyed each spring hardly ever happen now that the climate is much dryer and hotter.

Furthermore, in the mid 1970s, a young girl came up to Anno and Jaulene's home in Melody Knolls to report that her and her grandfather got stuck while off-roading in their Volkswagen bug and that they needed urgent help. After giving her immediate aid, the county sheriff's department was called. The girl took everyone to where they thought her grandfather was, but she had to admit she was lost. In time and only after extra people were rounded up to help did they eventually find the man and by that time, he had perished from the summer heat. In honor of the tragedy, an annual walk was held in the area; up until the last few years, it was called Steven's Walk.

To the west of Melody Knolls are the concrete ruins of the once thriving mining community of Dale I. Anno gave some specific details, which are not commonly known. One of the last remaining mill ruins, lays about a mile west of Melody Knolls and a mile east of Dale I ruins; the hill it lays on was called Steven's hill. At first glance it looks like the mill might have been a mine, and has been recorded as such by many, but according to Anno the site was only a mill. There is still a visible road going into the Pinto Mountains and was used to bring ore down; it connects to Gold Crown Road before going into the mountains. The road must have been used frequently, because even though it has not been used for decades, it is still visible over 100 years after the mill closed at the turn of the 20th century. Some people have suggested this was the original Virginia Dale Mine, however Anno made it clearly understood that the Virginia Dale Mine was actually much closer to the Pinto Mountains and that this was Steven's Mill.

At the base of the hill are the ruins of a home. Anno asserted there was a home there as late as 1972, and a fellow named "Shorty" lived in the house until it burned down. Afterward, Shorty brought in a singlewide trailer and lived there until he died in the late 1970s. Anno warmly remembered Shorty, who drove a pickup truck and had five dogs that frequently jumped out while he was driving. Shorty survived by mining his claims in the Pinto Mountains to the south until the day he died.

To the west of the old mill site is another small hill; this location was once called Thornton's Corner. On this hill is the concrete ruin of the assayer office for the Dale Mining District, before it moved into the mountains. At the base of the hill is a tree, and the concrete ruins for one of Dale I's five mills. According to Anno, the location once had a well over 100 feet deep, but it has since been filled.

Anno also remembered the ruins of what is now referred to as the town of Bush; named after the owner Irving Bush. To the north of Melody Knolls are the ruins of what many people thought was a once thriving chemical company; nevertheless, Bush was actually Schenley's whisky distillery. Anno frequently explored the ruins before vandals destroyed most of them. When confronted with the information that many people think Bush was actually a chemical company, Anno quickly responded, "if you look close enough you can see a furnace for heating, the large silo was used for grain storage; it is so big a truck can drive right under it." Anno explained, "When I arrived in Melody Knolls in 1964, it was common knowledge that the ruins on Dale Dry Lake were once a whisky distillery for the makers of Schenley Whisky."

Anno also gave some supporting information. Apparently, there was a third name for the dry lake. It was first called Burt's Dry Lake –

after Burt's Well – followed by Dale Dry Lake – after the Virginia Dale Mine and Dale I, and when Anno arrived, the dry lake was commonly referred to as Schenley's Dry Lake. In time, however, the name Schenley's Dry Lake was forgotten, and with the name never recorded on a map, Anno thought it might be lost forever, "My wife and I are perhaps the last remaining people who know this important historical fact."

Not to worry Anno, the name is now recorded for posterity.

The whisky distillery could boast a large 12' x 12' antique furnace that was used for heating during the distilling process. The concrete silo had large doors whereby a large truck could easily drive into it, and there were large stern pots and paddle mixers on the site. Anno also contends the ruins of Bush had nothing to do with the now present salt operations.

There was actually a caretaker on the site when Anno first arrived in 1964. There was an old garage for servicing trucks, and a series of six houses, which was believed to be the quarters for the workers, "It looked like a motel at first glance." In time however, all the structures were burnt down.

The road going to Bush is now called Iron Age Road, and was commonly used by trucks going to the Iron Age Mine in the mountains to the south. The Iron Age Road was developed for trucks and equipment to travel to the Iron Age Mine from Amboy, and was a much better route than some of the roads crossing the sand dunes in the middle of the valley; the road skirts the higher area near Sheephole Mountains to the north and east of Dale Dry Lake, and trucks that were used to deliver ore from the mine were serviced at the Bush truck garage. After a recent inspection, a gas pump ruin was discovered, which seems to substantiate Anno's claim. According to Anno, it was common knowledge that all types of cars and trucks could be serviced at the Bush truck garage, which had been specially built large enough to accommodate semi-trucks.

A little research has determined that the term chemical company is rather broadly defined, which can involve the makers of whisky and other related hard alcohols. Additionally, it is entirely feasible that there were several types of production facilities on the Bush site, including the obvious salt related products. However, Anno and the early pioneers who lived in Melody Knolls may be right in their legend of a Schenley distillery.

Anno helped a plane owner who got stuck on Dale Dry Lake (Sanger photograph)

At the northern end of Iron Age Road is the connection to Amboy Road. Near this intersection corner was once a thriving business called Barnet's Restaurant. The restaurant was a local success story and by all accounts served great food, including Buffalo Burgers and Chicken and Dumplings. Yet, what made Barnet's most fascinating was not its food, but rather the fact that it boasted a zoo. This legendary zoo displayed pigs and birds, including peacocks, as well as several donkeys for children to ride. Barnet's also had a gift shop. This now legendary eatery was once a welcome reprieve for weary travelers and their children before it burned down about 1980; and is fondly remembered by Anno and Jaulene today.

In the 1980s, Dale Dry Lake had become a known dropping point for drug smugglers. Several times a week a small single engine plane would fly low over the dry lakebed and drop several packages to a vehicle waiting below. This repeated activity went on for several years; that was until federal authorities eventually put a stop to it. It seemed the local folk continued to complain, but nothing was ever done, so they just gave up. However, in time, a large contingent of unmarked cars waited for the drop to be made, and after the packages were dropped to the car below, they blocked off the only route into and out of the lakebed. With both directions of Iron Age Road blocked the drug smugglers surrendered without incident. In that raid over 425 pounds of marijuana was recovered.

Wagon-lady visits Melody Knolls (Sanger photograph)

Because of its desolate location, drug smuggling had always been a problem. However, in recent years, the biggest problem to occur in the area around Melody Knolls has been illegal aliens, who often run out of gas and or require water to drink.

In the mid 1990s, the village of Melody Knolls was visited by the “wagon-lady,’ as everyone called her. This elderly lady was traveling to Texas by horse and wagon and stopped and camped in the village for a couple of days to water and rest her animals before venturing into No Man’s Land. Anno and Jaulene fondly remembered her as a very friendly sort of person who enjoyed people. She allowed Anno to pet and even feed her horses while she camped at the site of the old Melody Knolls gas station.

Jaulene also boasted her lone travels in the area. While Anno was out working, she often scavenged the valley, including the ruins of Dale I, Frank Sabathe’s stage and freight deport, and Bush. Jaulene remembered finding discarded campsites with several old beds near Dale I; often sighting only wood particles and rusted springs. While searching the Dale Dry Lake area, she also discovered old snake beads, which she believed had been discarded by Indians.

The Wagon-lady getting ready to leave Melody Knolls after a respite (Sanger photograph)

And finally, when referring to the Sanger's, Cary Crane said it best, "Anno and Jaulene must be recognized for their contribution to the legacy of Melody Knolls. They have kept the story and the spirit of this village alive all these years. Anno and Jaulene are, without a doubt, the patriarchs of Melody Knolls, California."

Chapter 17

Betrayal and the Old Woman Meteorite

The Old Woman Mountains were named after the Old Woman Statue, which is a prominent rock formation and is found on the eastern side of the range about two miles south of Paramount Spring. The Old Woman Mountains are located south of Essex, California and northwest of Rice. The Old Woman Mountain range is roughly 15 miles wide east to west at its widest point and 25 miles in length from north to south. The mountain range reaches an elevation of 3720 feet at the northeastern end, near Mercury Mountain, and lies in No Man's Land California. Consequently, the meteorite discovered within the Old Woman Mountains has come to be referred to as the Old Woman Meteorite.

While looking for the legendary Lost Arch Spanish Gold Mine in late 1975, three men from Twentynine Palms discovered a different kind of metal, one that would leave an indelible mark on the history of No Man's Land California. In March 1976, David Friburg, Mike Jendruczak, and Hack Harwood made public their discovery of a meteorite in the mountain range known as Old Woman Mountains.

Old Woman Mountains is located northwest of Rice and the center of No Man's Land

Jendruczak was perhaps the first man to see the meteorite; he was drawn to a reddish-brown and black rock that seemed out of place amongst the other rock formations. He had seen and studied them in his travels to museums, so when he tapped on it, Jendruczak immediately knew it was a meteorite. As this event emerged, Jendruczak would also become one of the group's most outspoken public figures, often brandishing his copy of the men's placer mining claim to anyone who would listen.

According to Friburg, only he and Jendruczak were present when the meteorite was first discovered; however, all three men were known to have visited the area, and mining records had them listed in their claim of ownership of the meteorite. The meteorite was discovered in 1975, near the valley community of Cadiz. The two men struggled up over a half dozen canyons before encountering the reddish-brown and black rock on a steep mountainside. They were able to immediately see the meteorite, only perhaps because it stood out amongst the tan and gray boulders, which surrounded it.

For several months, the group tried to figure out what they were going to do with their unique find. At one point, they thought about hiring a commercial helicopter to lift the meteorite out of the canyon. They also considered making a documentary of the find and its removal; but after discovering such actions would be cost prohibitive, they tried to sell it to a museum and a university. Little did they know at the time, but it was their own actions that eventually brought the full weight of the United States government down upon them, something they could ill afford to fight.

Old Woman Mountains

The men broke off chips of the meteorite and sent them to the Griffith Observatory in Los Angeles and to Professor John Wasson at University of California, Los Angeles for examination and analysis. Wasson, in particular, immediately recognized the sampling as a "Type IIB," which was exceptionally rare at that time. Soon after, the Smithsonian Institution in Washington DC learned about the meteorite’s existence. Dr. Roy Clark, the Smithsonian curator of meteorites, promptly met with Friburg, Jendruczak, and Harwood. The men thought little of taking Clark to the meteorite site, a day they would one day regret. Harwood would eventually claim, "We were trying to be decent guys about this."

As an agent of the United States Government, Clark would eventually lay claim to the meteorite under the 1906 Antiquities Act, but not before a legal fight and public spectacle. Before bringing the weight of the government down on the group, Clark first tried to buy off the men with a tender’s fee of $5,000, something the men quickly rebuked. They did, however, make it known that they would accept one million dollars, a price the government refused to pay. Clark hoped, like many meteorologist, by studying the meteorite he could learn more about the origin of the solar system as well as the environment in which the meteorite was formed.

Stewardship of the space rock would eventually be divided into three camps. Wasson thought it should remain public, and be displayed in California; Clark wanted it sent to the Smithsonian for protection and further scientific study; whereas, Friburg, Jendruczak, and Harwood wanted money for their discovery.

At one point, a rumor was circulated that Friburg, Jendruczak, and Harwood would go up into the Old Woman Mountains and breakup the meteorite if their payment demand was not honored; a rumor the government took seriously.

In the end, governmental authority won the day. On June 17, 1977, the government acted quickly and decisively in moving the meteorite. A Marine heavy helicopter squad from El Toro, lifted the meteorite with a CSH53 heavy helicopter and loaded it on the back of a truck, followed by sending it to the BLM District Office in Riverside, where it was stored until a final decision was determined. As the Old Woman Meteorite drove off everyone could hear Harwood saying, “We tried to do the right thing and now they (the Smithsonian and the BLM) are taking away something that rightfully belongs to us."

A rigging team from the first El Toro Marine Division Support Group scaled the mountain side of Old Woman Mountain, and by means of gear let down to them by helicopter, the men managed to get a heavy duty cargo net under the meteorite. The helicopter crew from

Marine Heavy Helicopter Squadron 363 effortlessly removed the three-ton meteorite from its long time home.

Transfer of the 3-ton meteorite took only a few hours to complete. To the amusement of over twenty reporters and photographers, Friburg, Jendruczak, and Harwood and several of their supporters were also present; they clearly wanted the press to understand that their own government had victimized them by taking their huge nickel-iron object.

The scene was, however, tense. On one side of the meteorite there was the uneasy alliance of Friburg, Jendruczak, Harwood and now Wasson, UCLA meteorite expert; and on the other side there were the agents of the United States Government, Joe Gulliksen, area manager for the Bureau of Land Management (BLM); Clarke, curator from the Smithsonian; and marines from Santa Ana, California.

Essentially, Friburg, Jendruczak, and Harwood claimed the 1872 Mining Act provided them protection, while the government asserted the 1906 Antiquities Act took precedent over any earlier governmental action. In short, the Smithsonian believed the meteorite fell under the same category as dinosaur fossils, North American artifacts, and other items of unique scientific value. As such, the mining rights the three men were claiming had no bearing.

Furthermore, because of the Old Woman Meteorite incident, and the way it was handled by the United States government, miners named Tom Sanders and Art Wilson refused to disclose the location of their even larger meteorite in the desert between Barstow and Las Vegas; presumably near the northern tip of No Man's Land. In order to verify the claim, a certified assayer was secretly taken to the site, after which he certified the object was made of iron and nickel – similar to the Old Woman Meteorite.

Unlike Friburg, Jendruczak, and Harwood, Sanders never disclosed his 1927 discovery; he simply thought it was a piece of iron in the desert. He followed the Old Woman Meteorite incident closely, and quickly concluded it would be best to keep his site a secret; he did, however, make his claim public and seemed to enjoy the spotlight surrounding his assertion. Sanders claimed his "Squaw Tom" meteorite was larger than the Old Woman Meteorite.

By September 8, 1977, Interior Secretary Cecil Andrus informed Senator Alan Cranston that although the federal government had been granted title of the meteorite, it awarded California temporary custody. It seemed the incident hit a nerve amongst most Californian's, who thought the government was wrong for taking the men's iron rock. The disputed boulder had been in legal limbo since July 29, when a federal judge in Los Angeles imposed a temporary restraining order against the federal government; from taking it out of California. However, U.S. District Court Judge Francis Whelan declined an earlier effort to attain an injunction by Friburg, Jendruczak, and Harwood in late June.

Upon learning of the court decision, Friburg confirmed what many believed all along, "We always figured it was going to end up in the hands of the scientific community." The courts eventually allowed the meteorite to go to the Smithsonian Institution in March 1978, where a 942-pound section was removed; in September 1980; followed by its returned to California. As expected, the meteorite was ultimately sliced with some sections going to the Smithsonian and UCLA for future scientific study. Clarke said, "A meteorite is like a book, it has to be opened before it can be understood."

After the meteorite weighed in at 6,080 pounds, it was confirmed to be the second heaviest of all time in the United States. The heaviest being a 13-ton meteorite discovered near Willamette, Oregon in 1902. Following a stint at the L.A. County Museum of Natural History, the largest section of the space metal, worth about $100 at the time, was eventually taken to Barstow, where it remains on display today.

Since the meteorite was on public land, the men regrettably learned that a meteorite did not fall under the definition of a locatable mineral, which was defined by earlier mining laws. Rather, it was determined that under the conditions of the Antiquities Act, meteorites found on public land were deemed objects of scientific interest and consequently should go to the Smithsonian Institution.

Jack Harwood was contacted September 22, and 29, 2007 and asked to participate in this writing. On the first called he mentioned a week was needed to think about the interview request. On the second call, he said he did not want to be involved and that he wanted the whole issue to go away. Harwood did, however, mentioned enough had been written about the issue to do a story;

though, he did say that the three men started out with $10,000 and when they ran out of money, they decided they could no longer fight the government. It seemed evident from two phone conversations that Harwood will take the specifics of the Old Woman Meteorite to his grave.

There is perhaps no conclusion to the story, only a moral lesson. The tale of the Old Woman Meteorite is one of thievery. First by David Friburg, Mike Jendruczak, and Jack Harwood who tried to extort one million dollars from the government or any who would pay; followed by Dr. Roy Clark and the Smithsonian Institute that took one of California's biggest celestial findings away from the men who found it, giving them nothing for their discovery.

Lesson learned, never release the location of a discovery before negotiating an equitable finder's fee, otherwise any advantage that might exist will be lost. The actions by Clark may have secured possession of the Old Woman Meteorite; however, the way in which it was done also dampened those who may have specific knowledge of other meteorites, like Tom Sanders and Art Wilson, who never revealed their location.

Old Woman Meteorite Annotations:

> Tim Rose, who cut the Old Woman Meteorite with a wire type device, reported to Greg Stanley that his cutting went slow and took several months to complete, and that they discovered diamonds inside the space-stone.
>
> The Smithsonian did offer a reward to David Friburg, Mike Jendruczak, and Jack Harwood, but they refused their modest offerings. Instead, the men continued to ask for one million dollars or nothing…in the end the men received nothing for their troubles.
>
> The largest portion of the remaining meteorite, less 15%, is now on display at the Desert Information Center in Barstow, California.
>
> The meteorite was publicly displayed at the following locations: BLM buildings and museums in El Centro, Riverside, Redlands, Los Angeles, and Barstow.

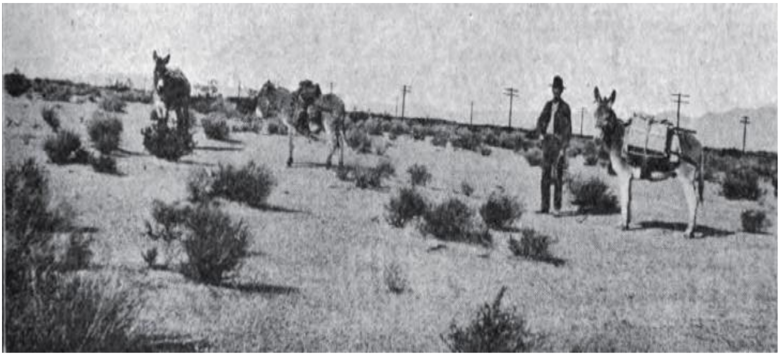
During the late 1970s and early 1980s, public interest in the meteorite remained high and was subsequently visited by perhaps millions of people who came from all around the world to see it.

For their hold out efforts, Professor John Wasson from UCLA, who tested a sample of the “Squaw Tom” meteorite, discredited both Sanders and Wilson. Wasson claimed that their discovery was nothing more than industrial iron with no meteoric structures.

Chapter 18

An Eclectic Collection of Historical Photographs Approximating No Man's Land California

To better help the reader of this publication understand what life was truly like in No Man's Land California during the late 1800s to the mid 1900s, your author included numerous historical photographs from the period. All of the photographs in this chapter were discovered while researching the area and depict what life was like in and around No Man's Land, California.

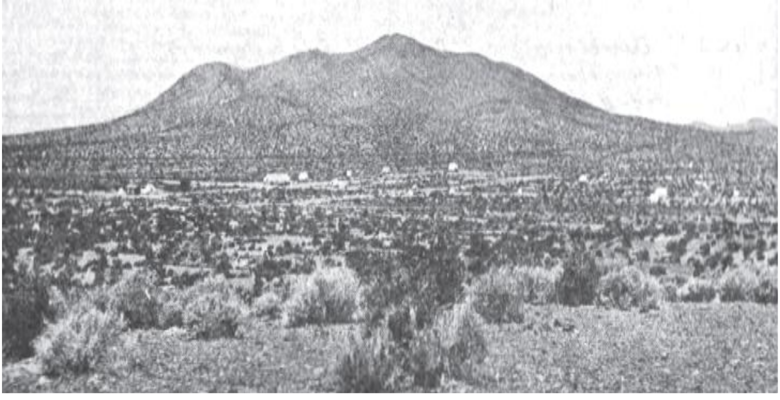


Typical from of transportation while traveling No Man's Land

An automobile crossing No Man's Land, circa 1916

Typical Indian home, circa 1896

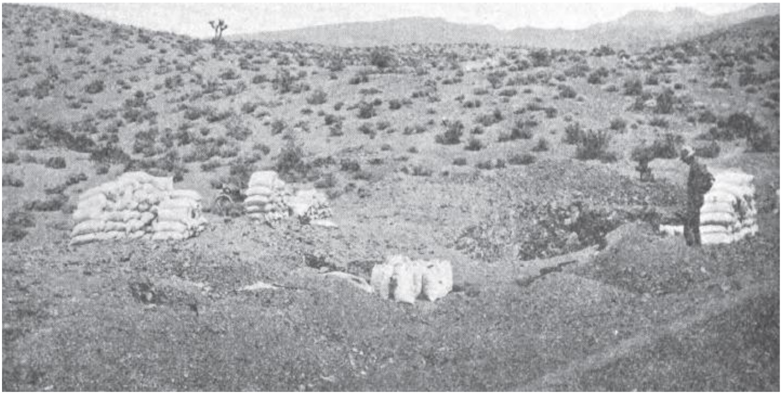
California desert natives, circa 1896



Goldstone Camp; a typical desert mining camp

Sacks of high grade ore stacked, ready for shipment (Goldstone Camp)

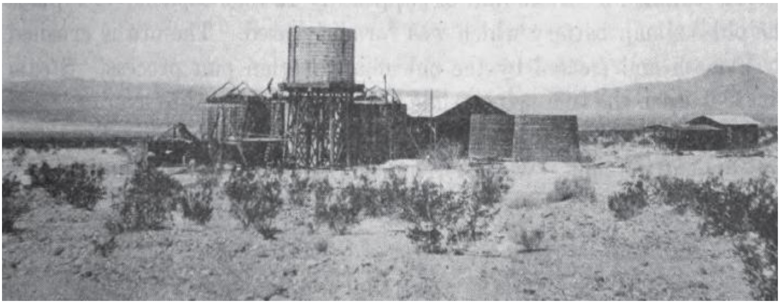
Open cut mine with bags of ore ready for shipment at the Goldstone Camp, circa 1916



Sacks of high grade ore ready for shipment at the Red Brig mine

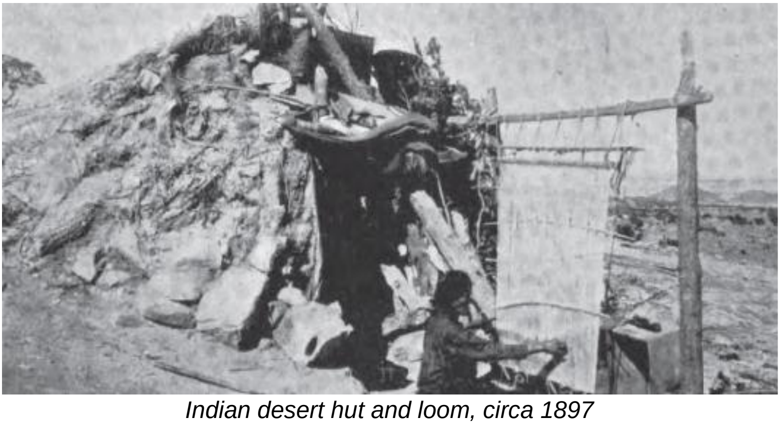
Open cut mining at the Red Brig mine, circa 1916

A small desert church, circa 1896



Daggett Reduction Company cyanide plant in Daggett, circa 1916

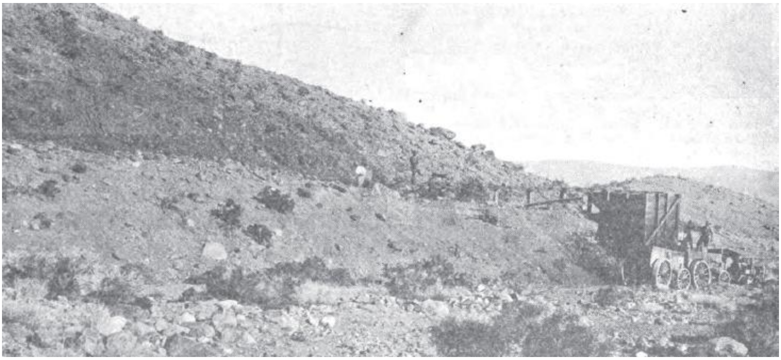
Palm Valley, circa 1896



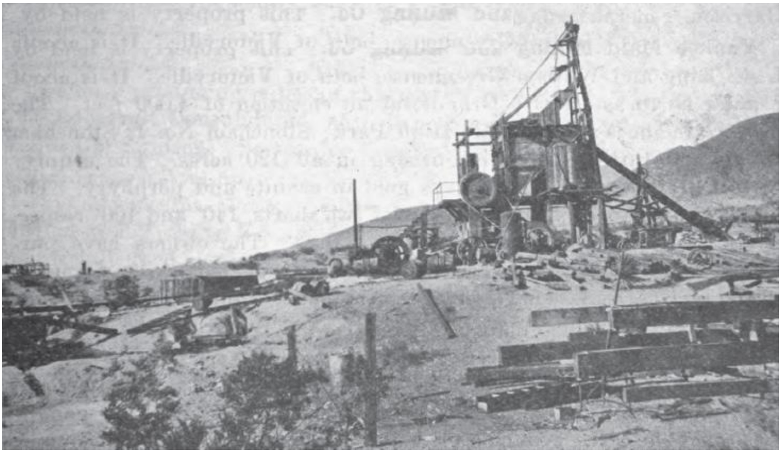
Indian desert hut and loom, circa 1897

Ibex mine, circa 1916

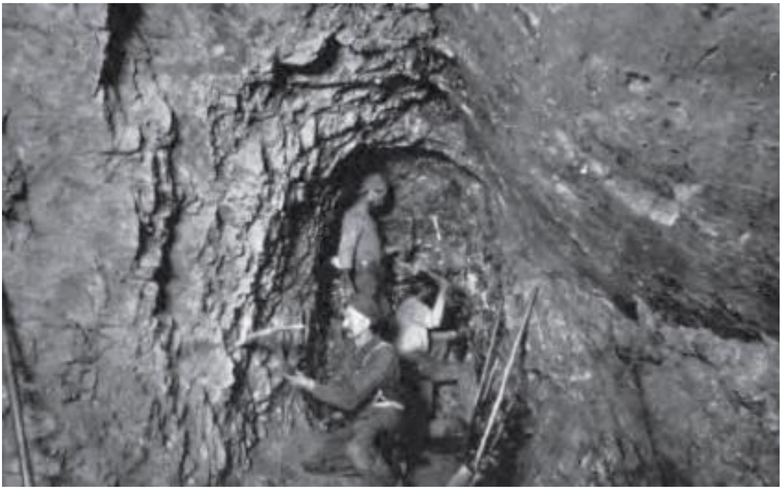
A 1901 picture of the Colorado Desert; south of No Man's Land



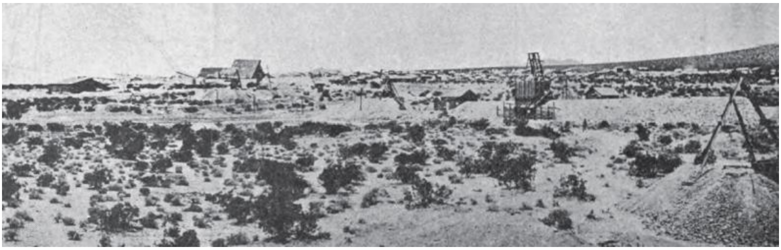
Owl Hole mine, circa 1916



Ozark mine mill and head frame at the shaft site, circa 1916



Miners working a mine shaft, circa 1897



Atolla Mining Company mine and mill site, circa 1917

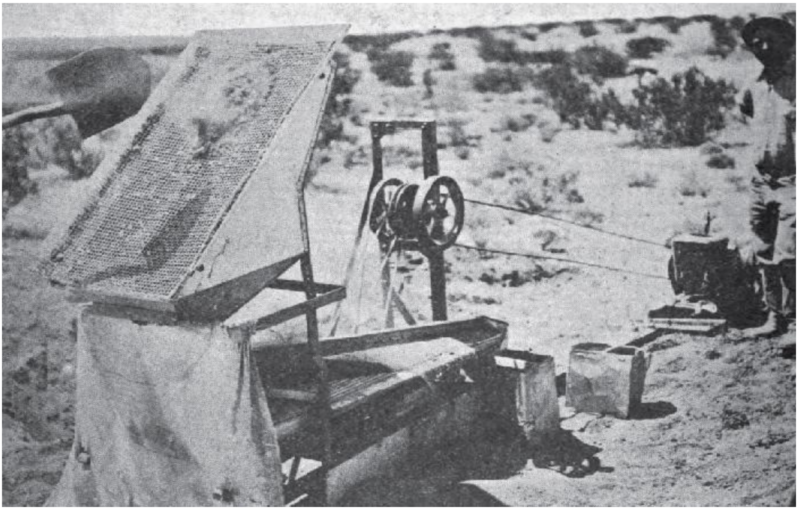
Miners working above the Morning Cut mine, circa 1897

Calico mining camp, circa 1917

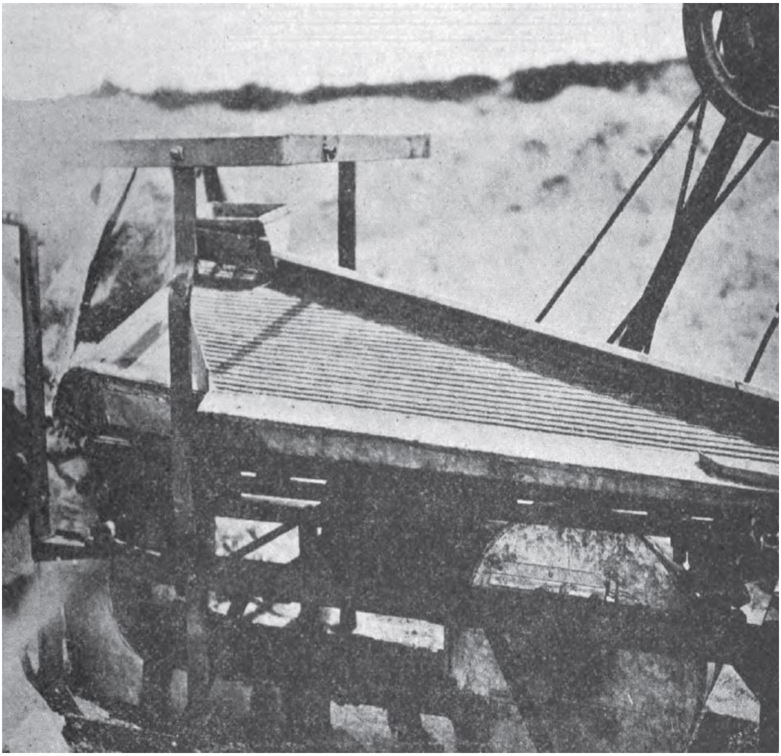
White Marble claim near Baxter

Miners crossing the desert in 1901

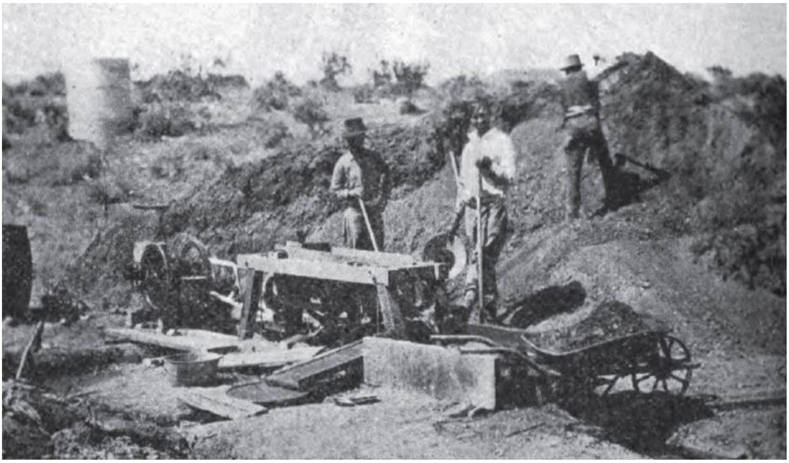
Crossing dry lake bed near Salton in 1901; 262’ below sea level



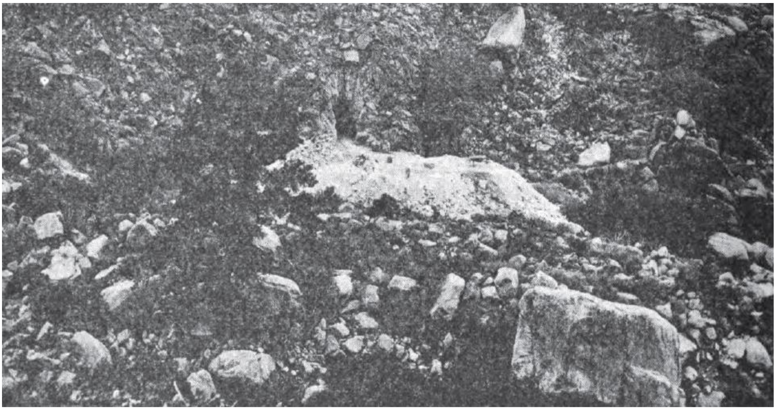
A Stebbins dry concentrator working near Atolla, circa 1916



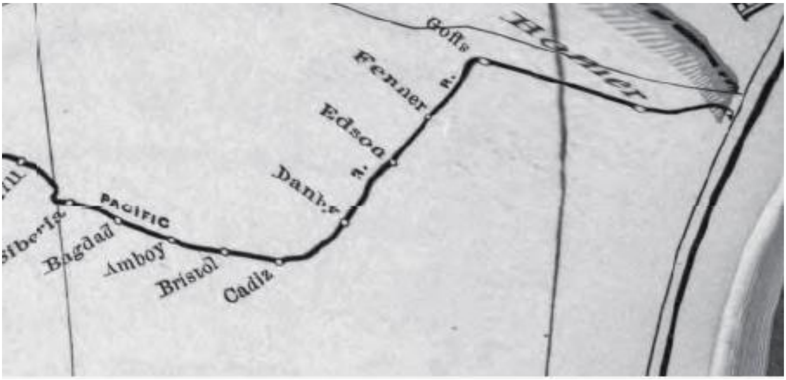
A Stebbins dry concentrator, circa 1916



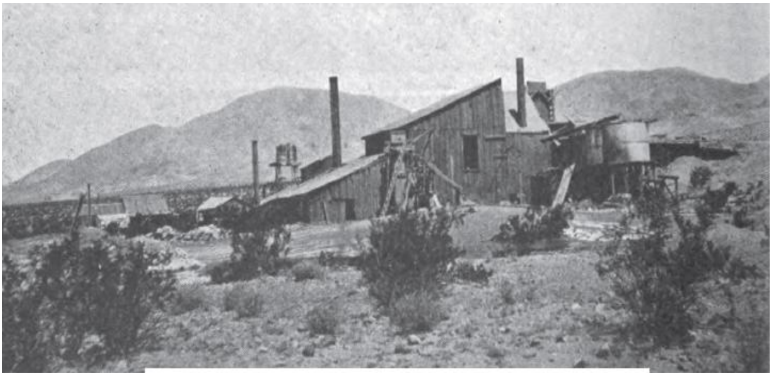
A Winans combination jig and sluice operation working near Atolia



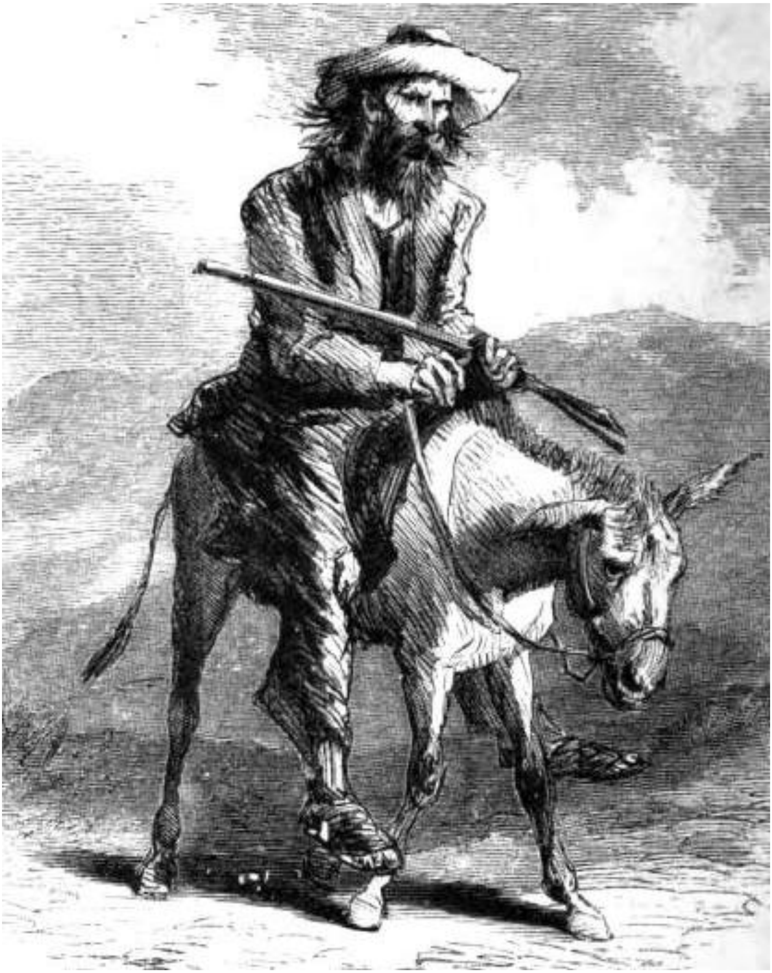
A carbonate tunnel in the New York Mountains


Goffs
Homer
Fenner
Edson
Danby
PACIFIC
Siberia
Bagdad
Amboy
Bristol
Cadiz

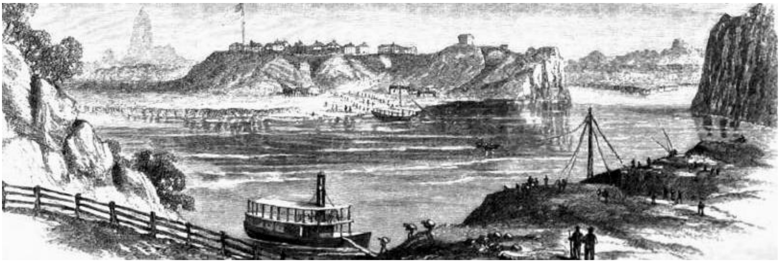
A railroad map of No Man’s Land in 1893; no rail line to Blythe Junction



Oliver Funk Osborn Company mill, south of Calico, circa 1916

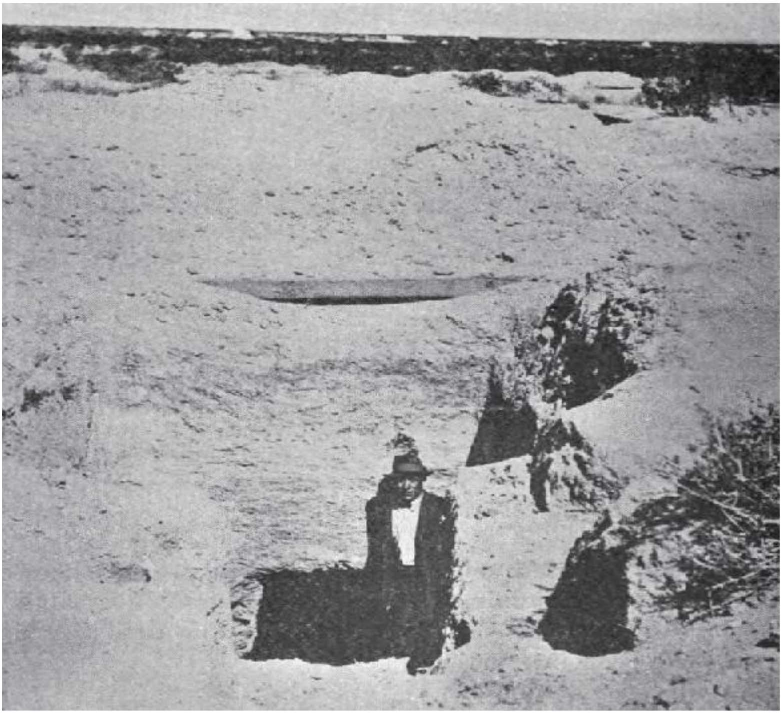


1864 sketch of a miner from Harper's Magazine



1864 sketch of Fort Yuma from Harper's Magazine

Five miners working a shaft, circa 1899



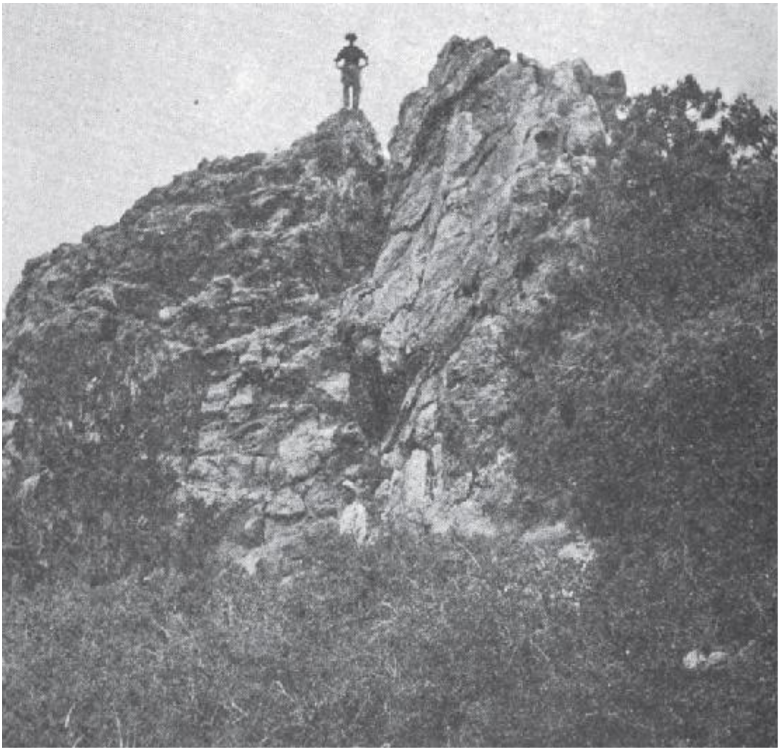
At the east end of the “Spud Patch” was a placer wash about 18’ in depth

West end of the "Spud Patch" near Atolia; depth of placer wash 10" to 2'

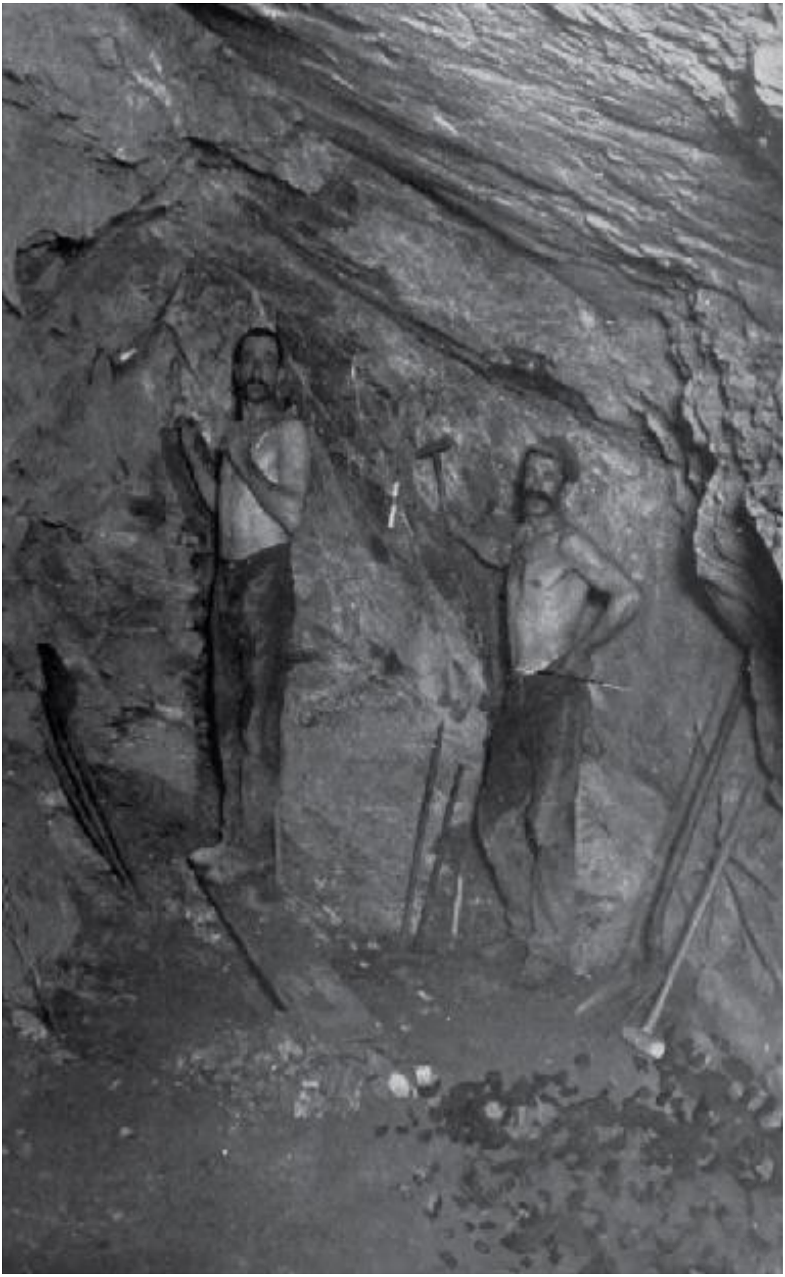
Northward view of Ivanpah Valley from the base of the New York Mountains, circa 1916

An Indian traveling on the from La Paz to San Diego, circa 1904

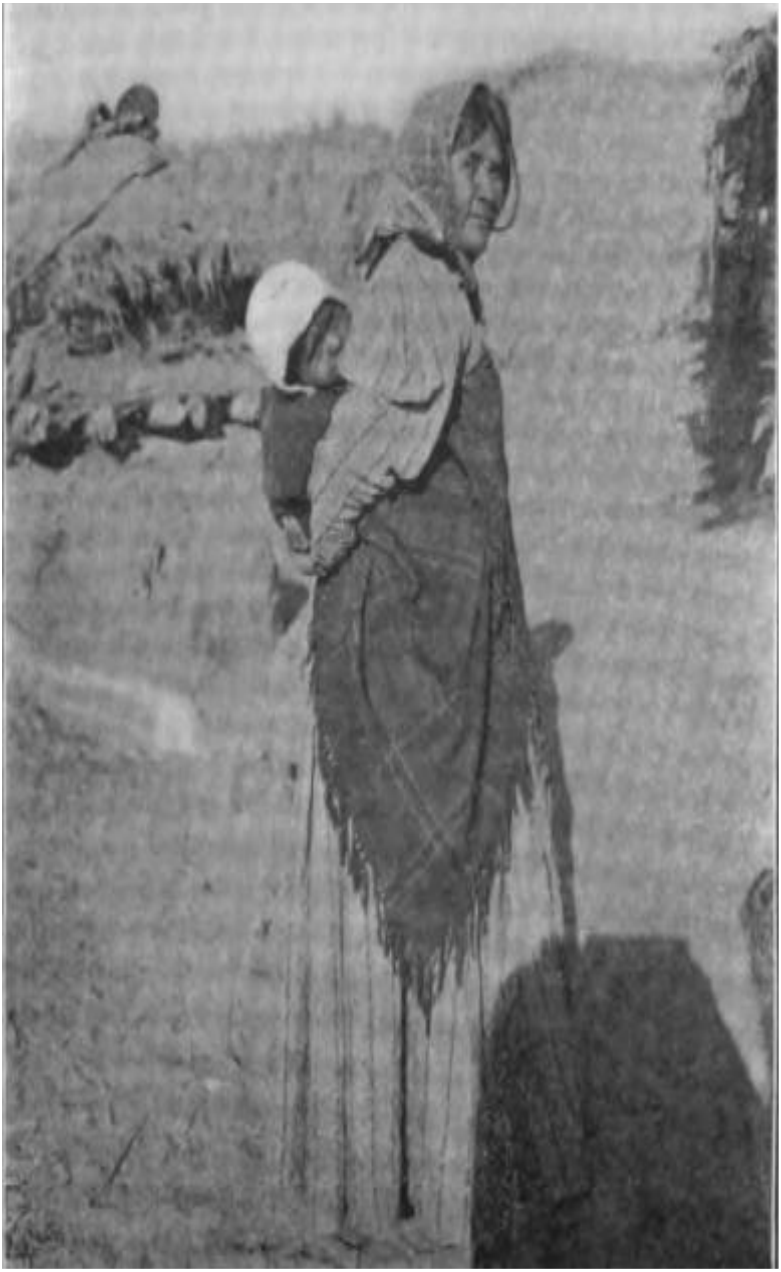
Miner taking ore out of a shaft, circa 1899



Western extremity of outcrop of the Tungsten King Group in the New York Mountains



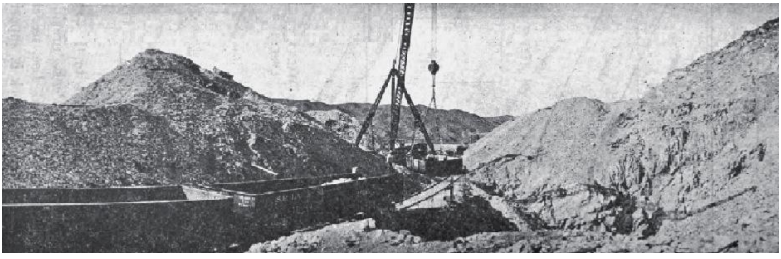
Miners working a shaft in 1899



A Chemehuevi Indian mother and child, circa 1904

View of miners working in the New York Mountains

Indians on the Colorado Desert, circa 1904



Limestone quarries at Baxter, circa 1916

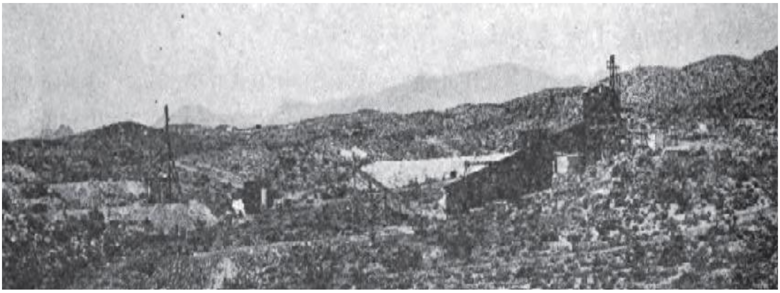
Pioneers crossing Furnace Creek, circa 1904

Death Valley, circa 1904

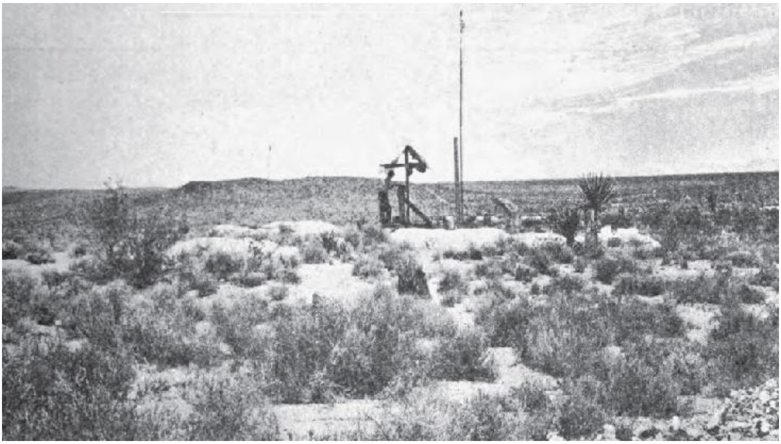
1904 view of the Colorado Desert

A bucking horse in the Colorado Desert, circa 1904

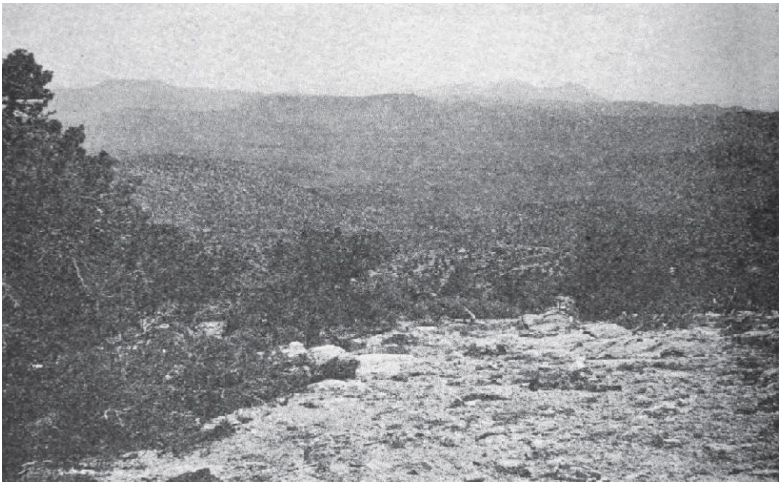
Tungsten ore pile, circa 1916



Louisiana California Mining Company site, circa 1916

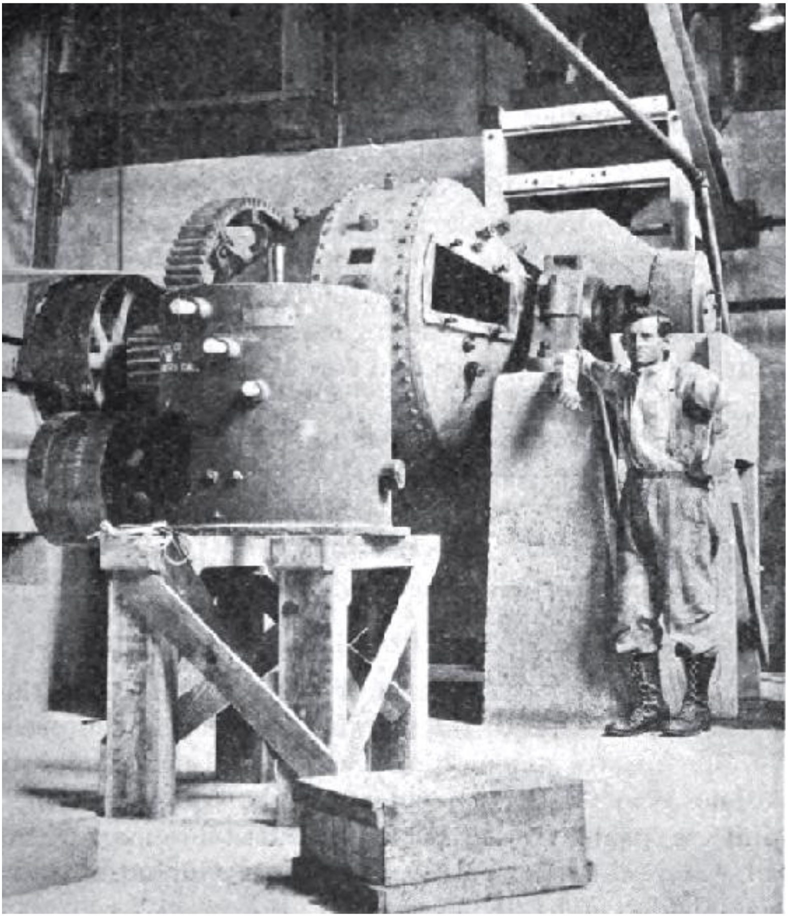


Eureka shaft in the Signal District

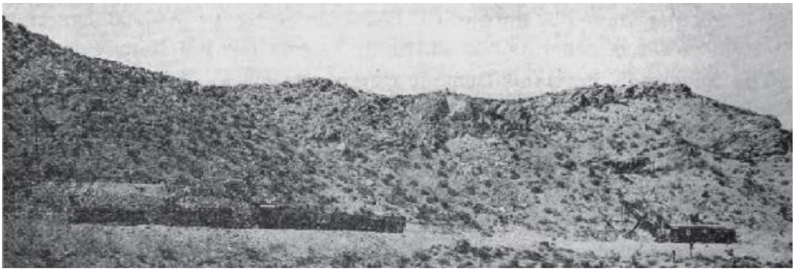


View from the New York Mountains at about 1200', circa 1916

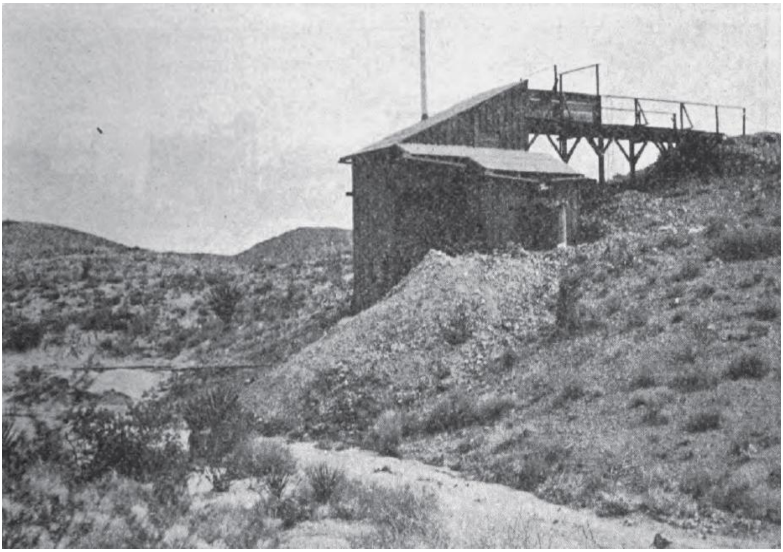
A rock crusher and hand jigs in the Signal District



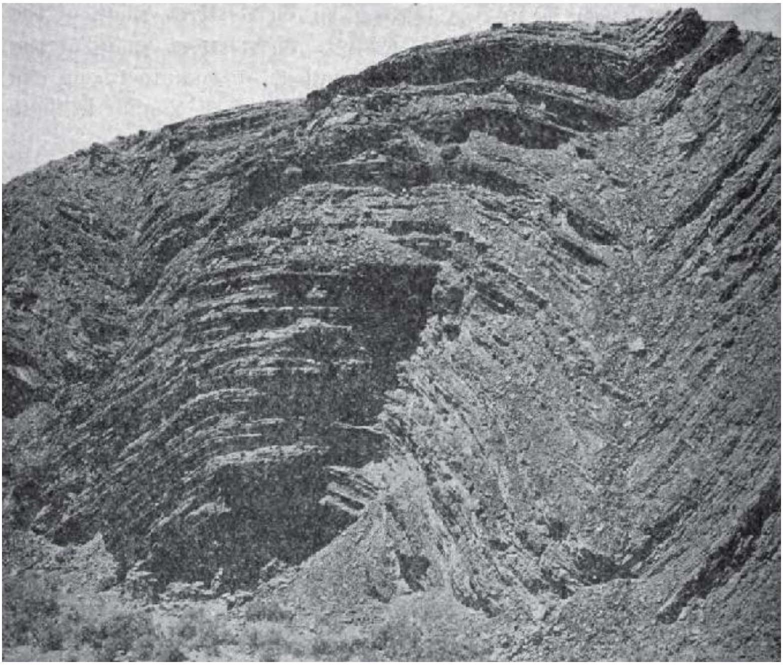
Hardinge Ball Mill at the Louisiana California Mining Company site



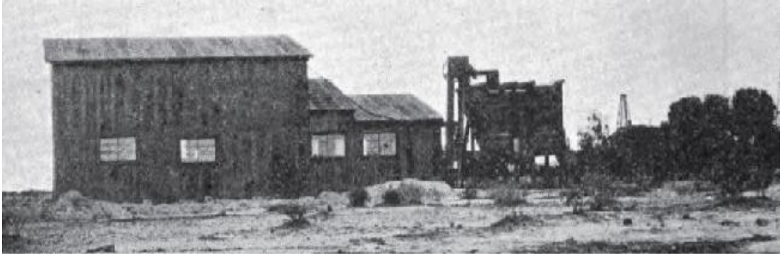
Southwestern Portland Cement Company's quarry;
steam shovel to the right, circa 1916



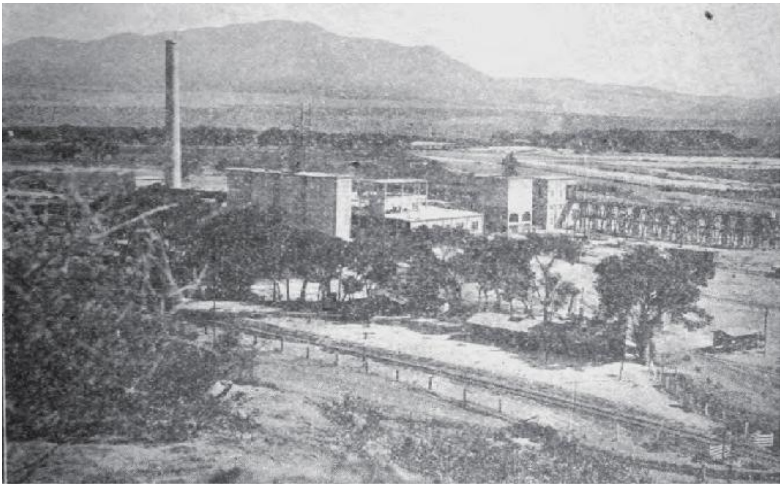
Dry concentration mill near Goffs, circa 1916



Calico clay beds, circa 1916



Concentration mill near Goffs, circa 1916

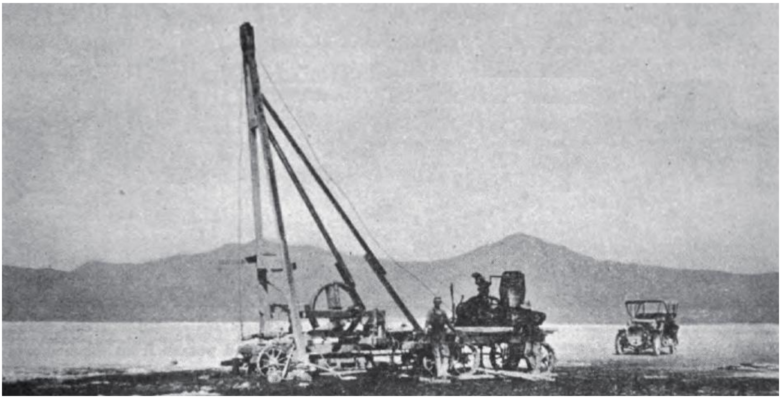


Southwestern Portland Cement Company near Victorville

Louisiana California Mining Company camp, circa 1916

Three Colored marble quarry;
the block marked X measured 6'x7'x9', circa 1916

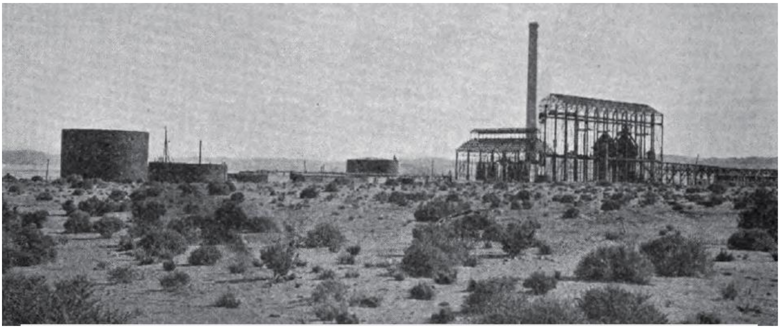
A white marble pit quarry near Baxter, circa 1916



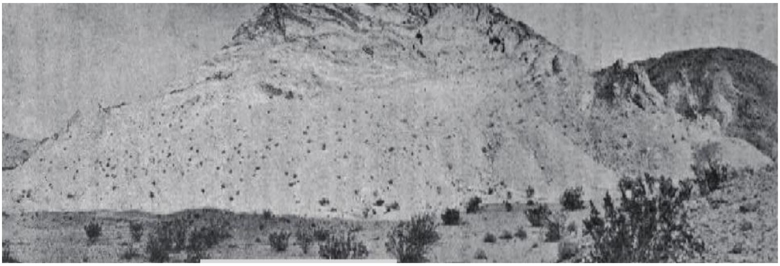
Searles Lake drilling operations

Arrowhead Hot Springs, circa 1916

Close up of a granite quarry, circa 1916



American Trona Company building a new million dollar plant on the northwest edge of Searles Lake for borax extraction



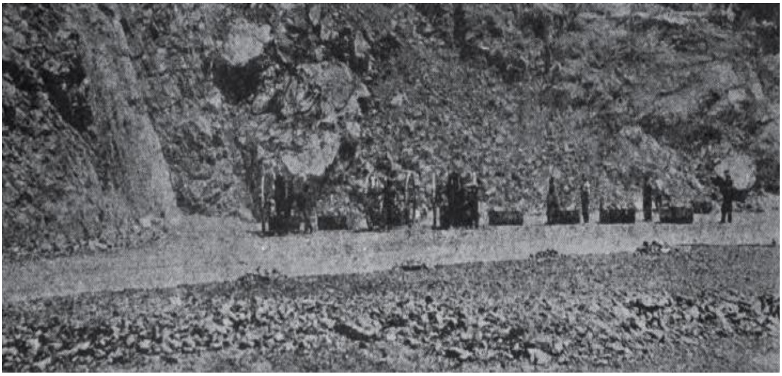
White marble claim near Baxter

American Trona Company camp at Searles Lake, circa 1916

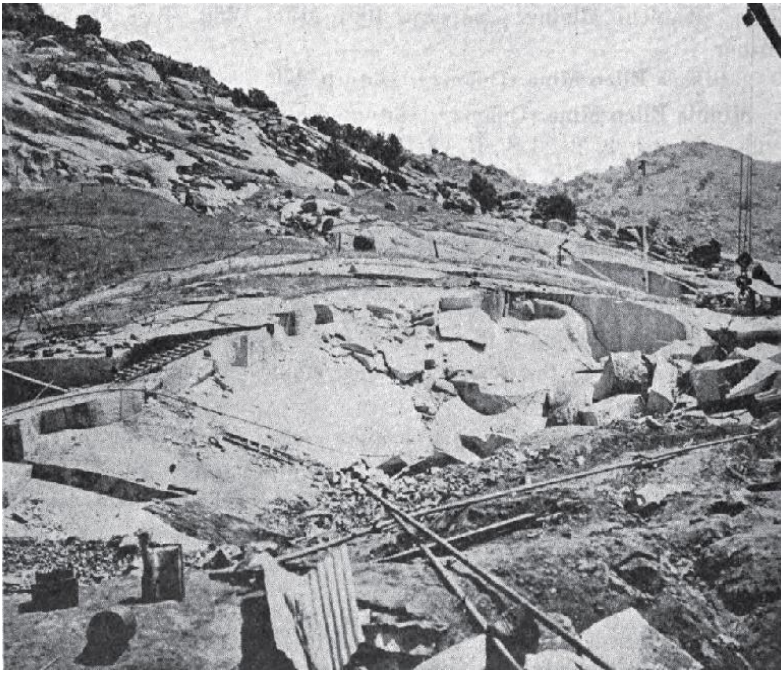
STEAM CAVES
STEAM

Steam caves at Arrowhead Hot Springs

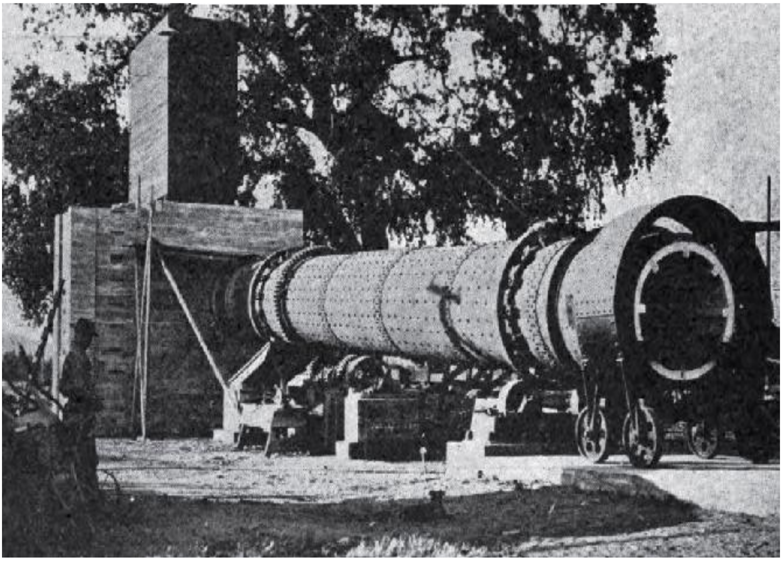
A typical lime quarry in the California desert, circa 1916



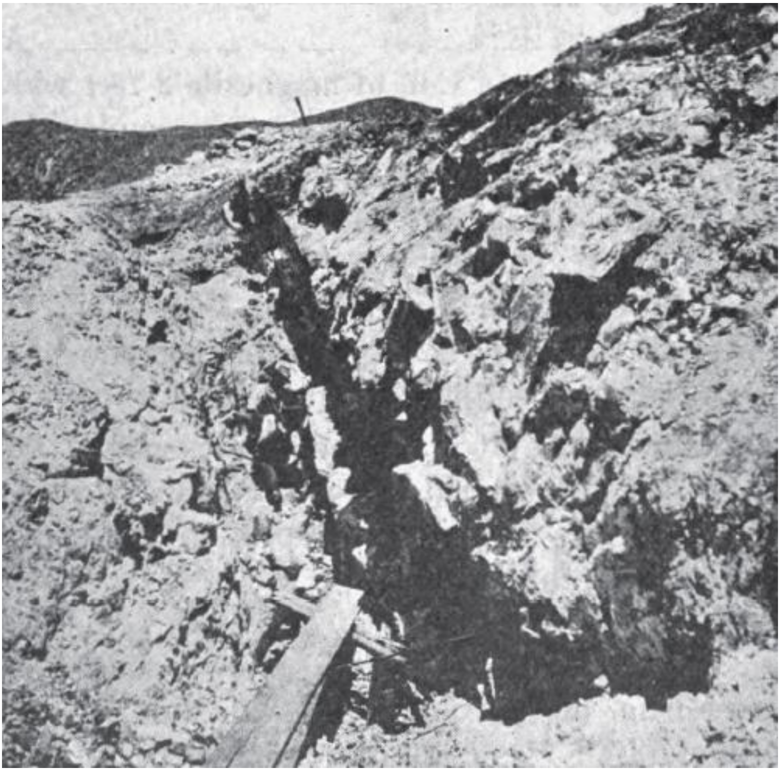
A typical California rock and gravel quarry, circa 1916



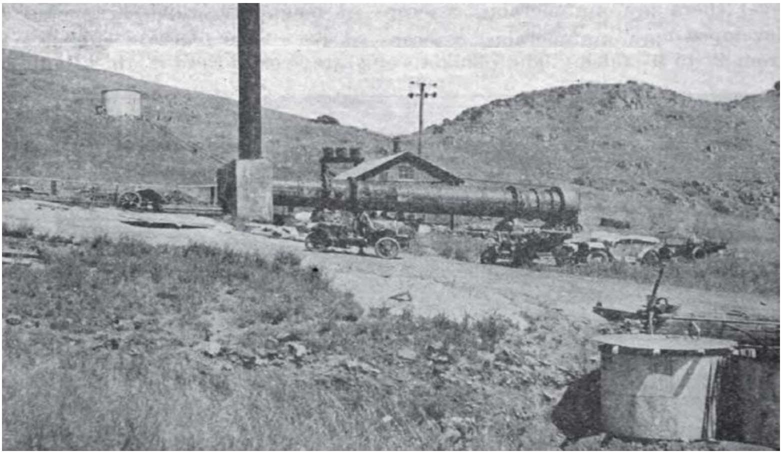
A typical California granite quarry



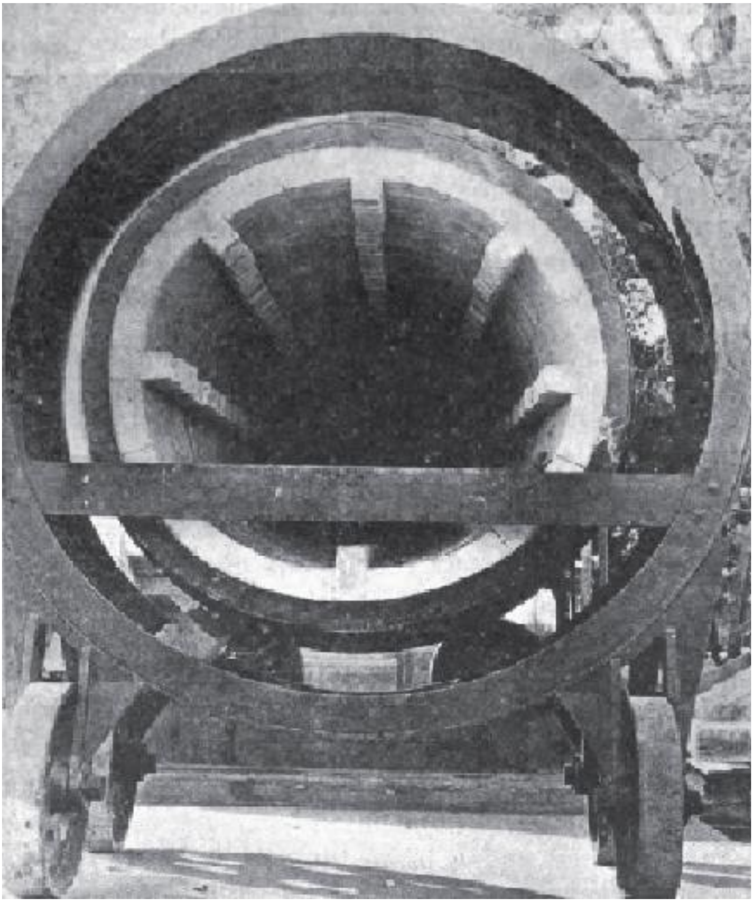
A rotary magnesite calcining kiln, circa 1916



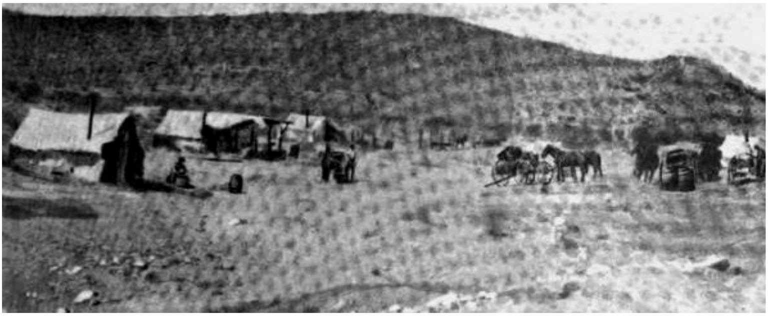
Blue Crystal mine, circa, 1916



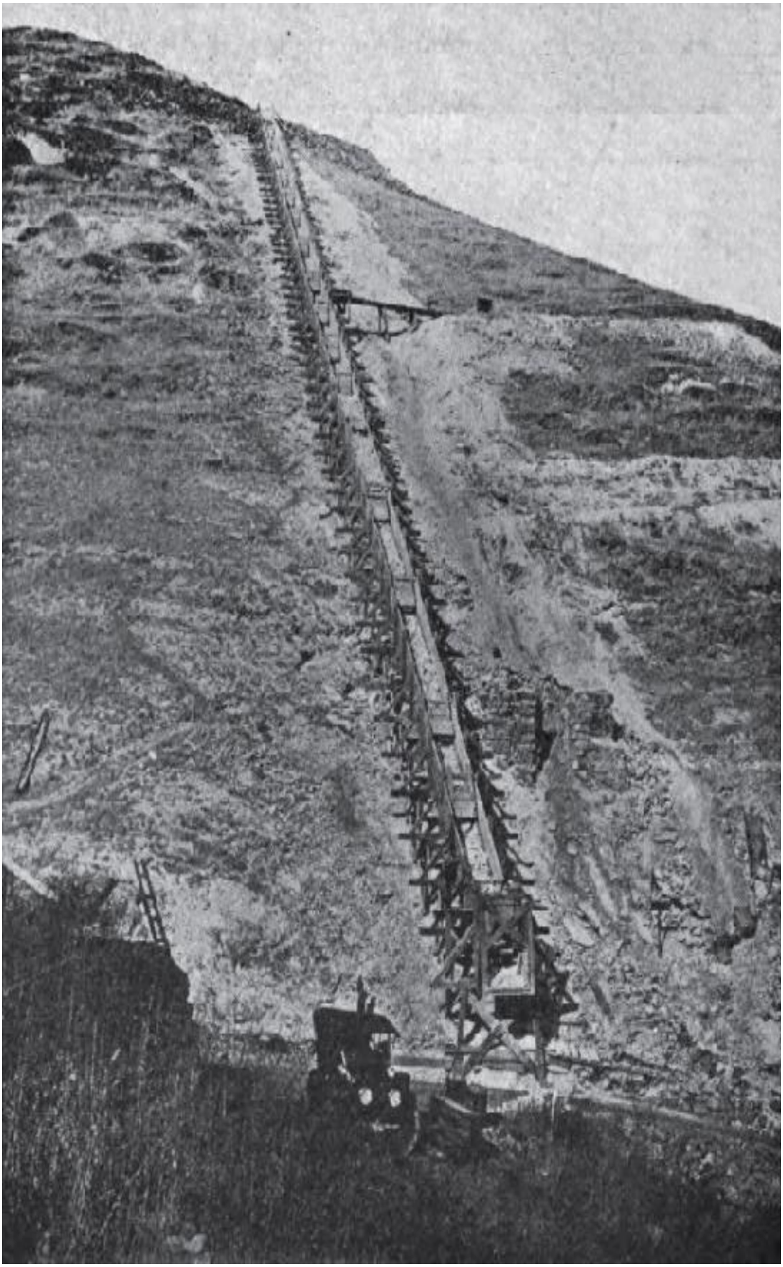
A rotary calcining kiln, circa 1916



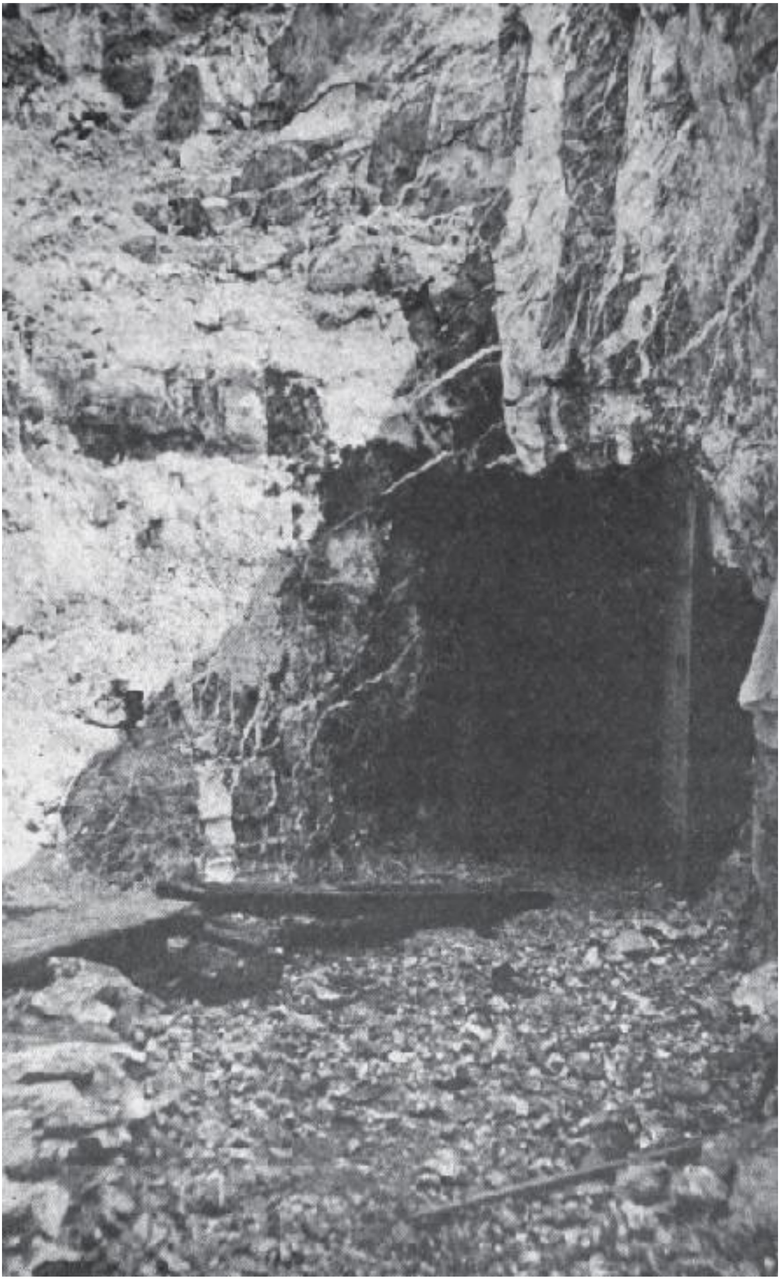
A close up view of the lining of a rotary kiln, circa 1916



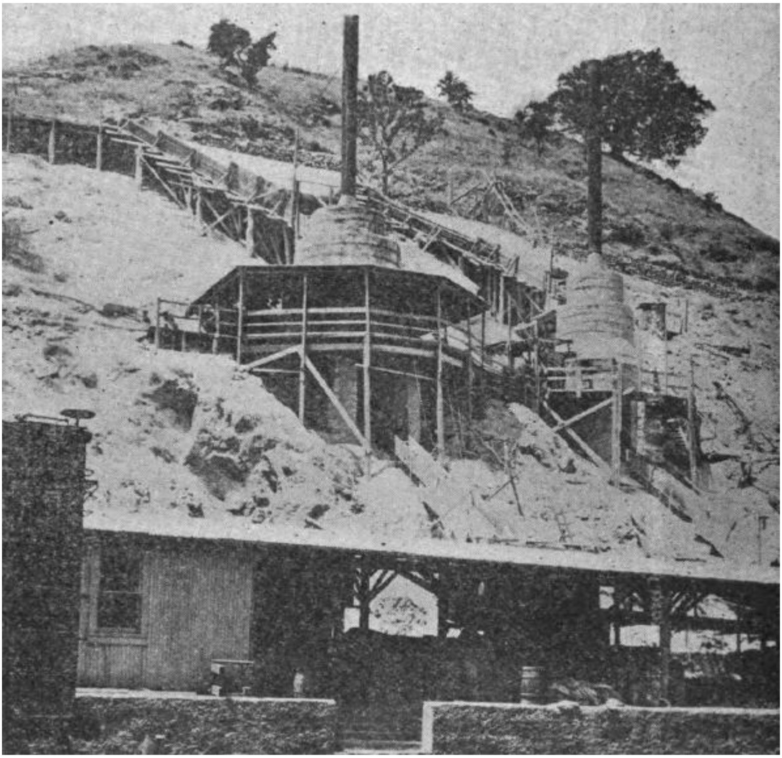
Summit Camp; a typical mining camp in California during the 1890s



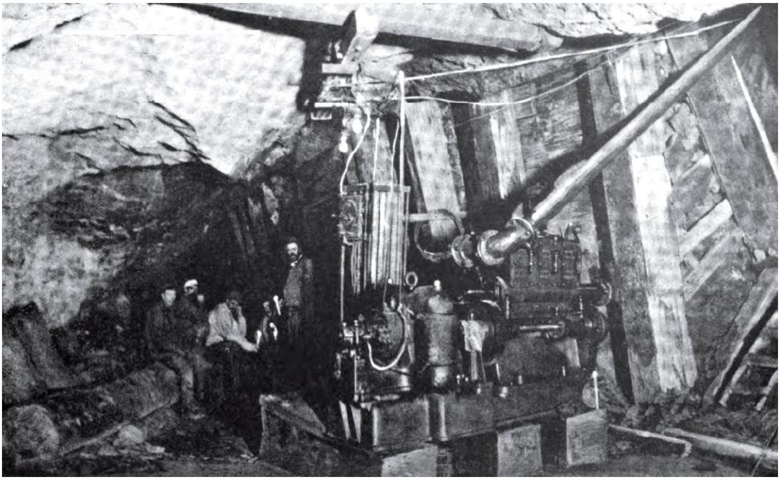
A typical loading chute, circa 1916



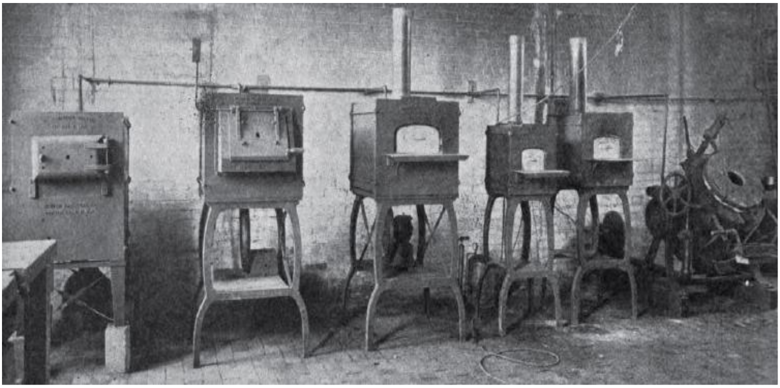
Burr Brothers magnesite mine Linsey



A typical magnesite calcining kiln operation in California, circa 1916

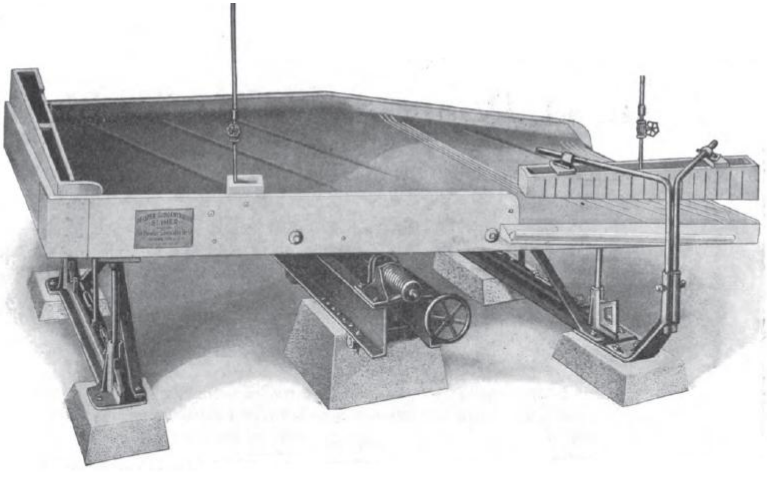


Electric mine pump, circa 1894

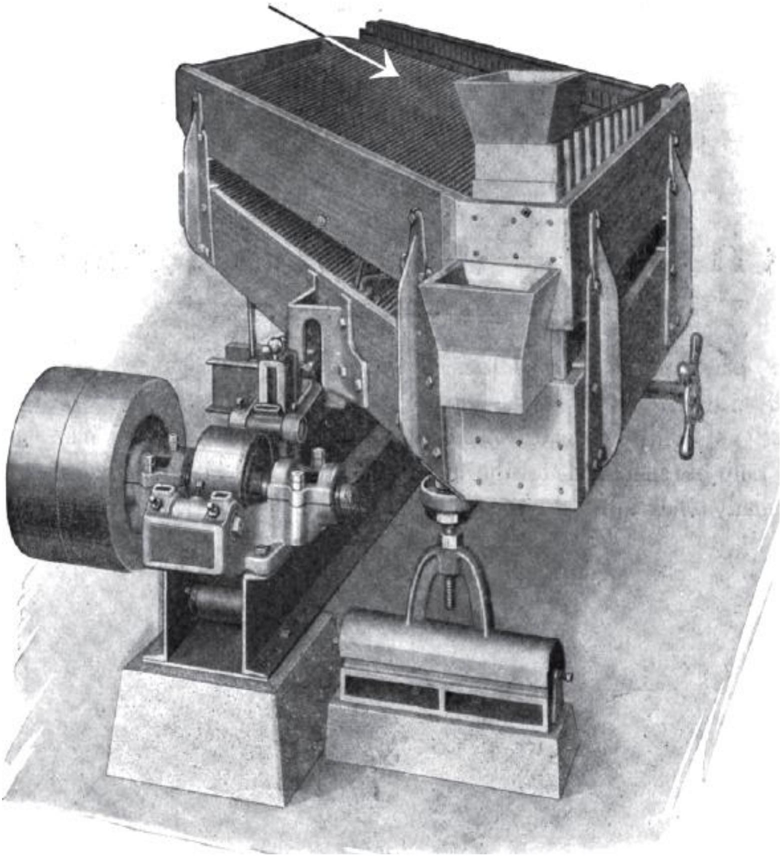


Typical metallurgical furnaces, circa 1914

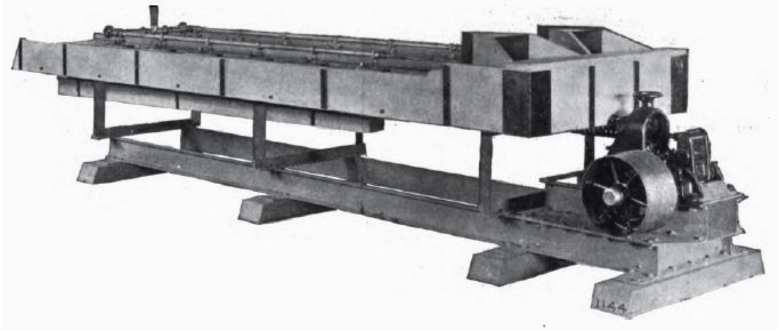
A pack train in Panamint Valley in 1894



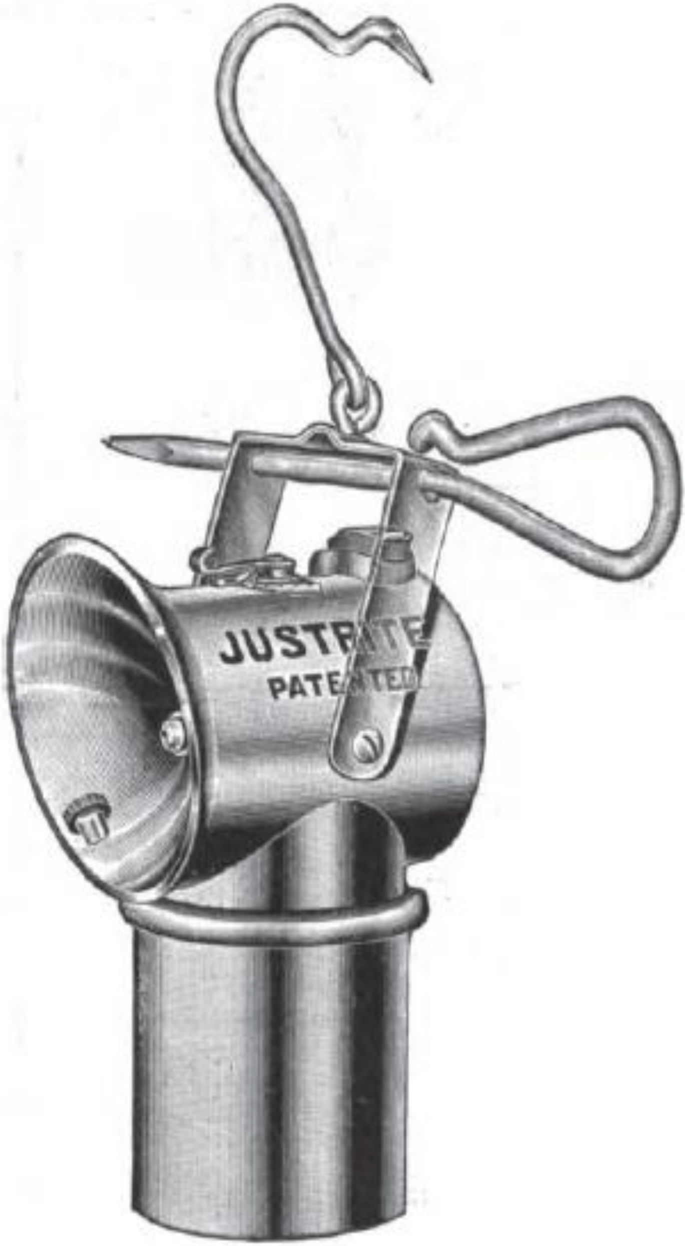
A Deister concentrator, circa 1914



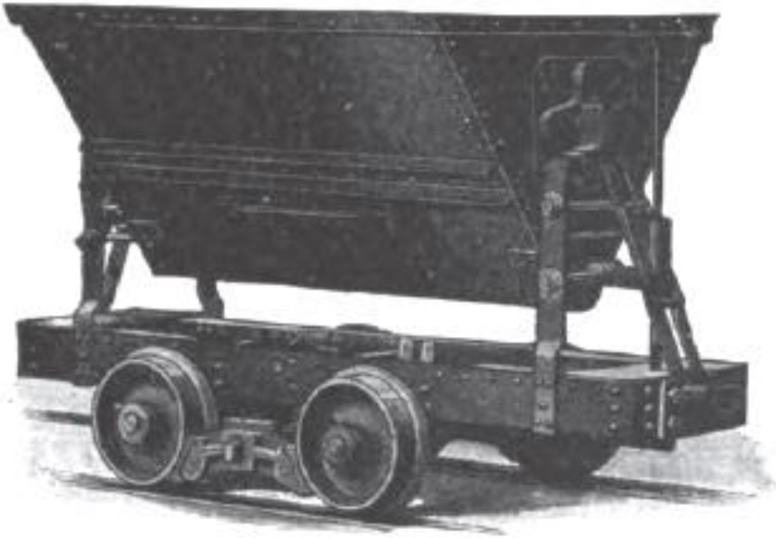
A typical concentrating table from 1914



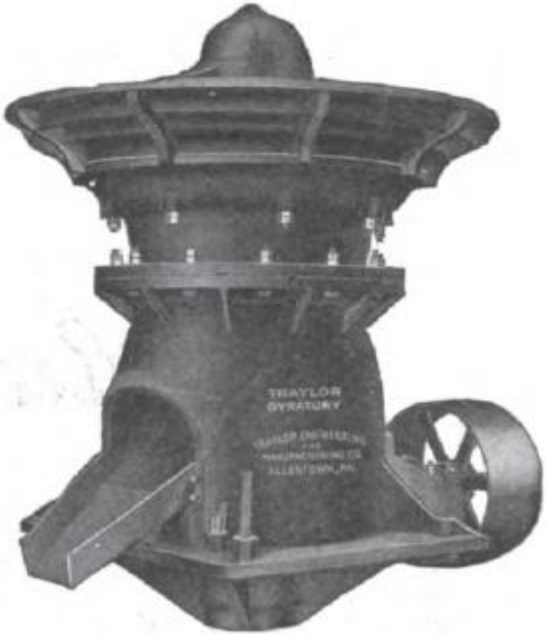
An Isbell concentrator, circa 1914


JUSTRITE
PATENTED

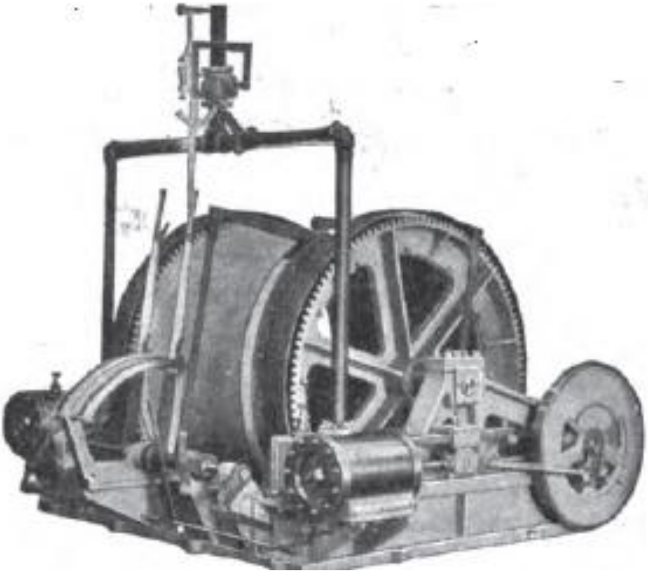
A typical mining lamp, circa 1914



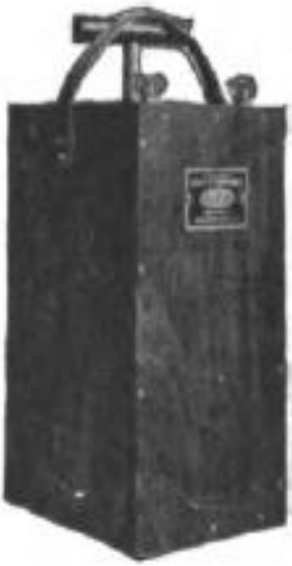
A Watt steel mine car


TRAYLOR
GYRATORY
TRAYLOR ENGINEERING
AND
MANUFACTURING CO.
ALLENTOWN, PA.

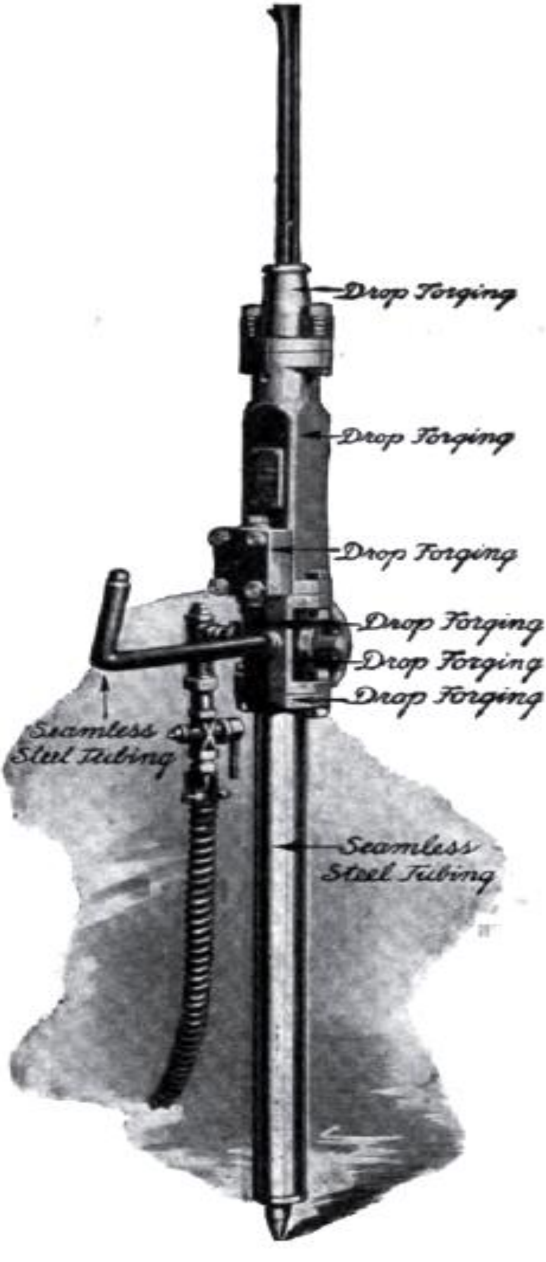
A Traylor gyratory crusher, circa 1914



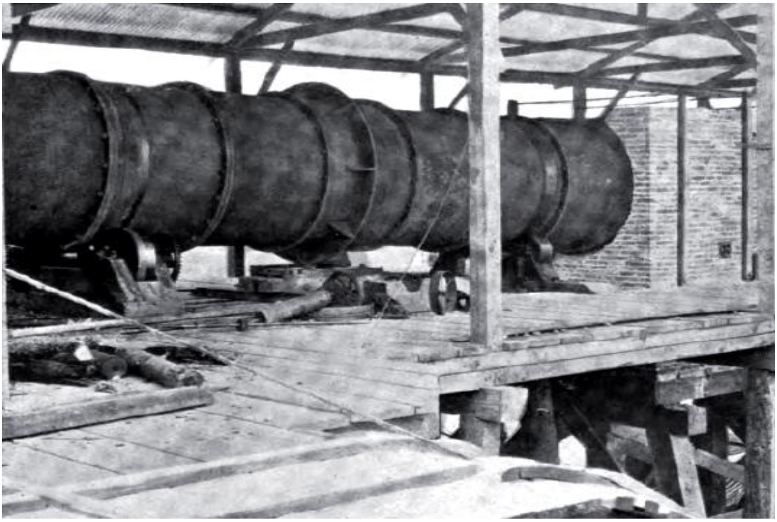
A Lidgerwood mine hoist, circa 1914



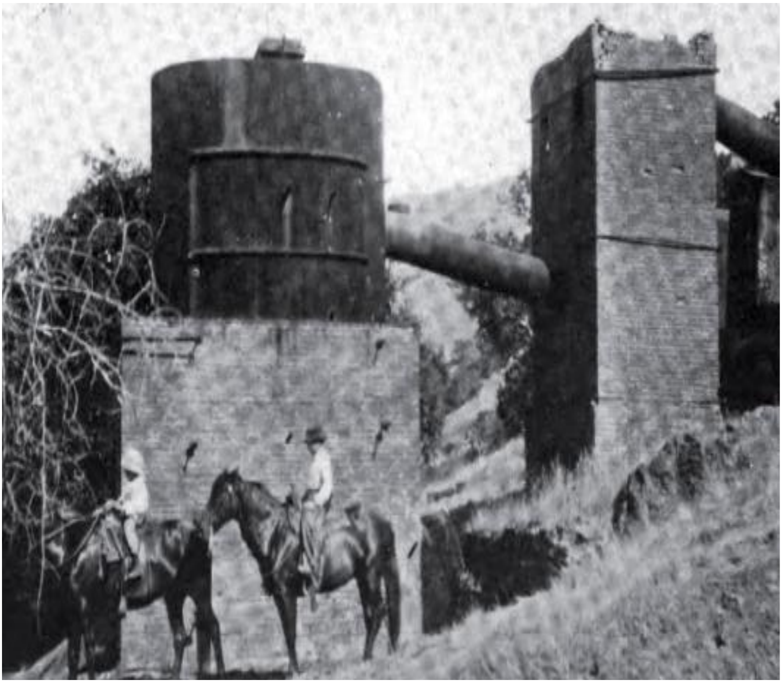
A Du Pont blaster, circa 1914


Drop Forging
Drop Forging
Drop Forging
Drop Forging
Drop Forging
Drop Forging
Seamless Steel Tubing
Seamless Steel Tubing

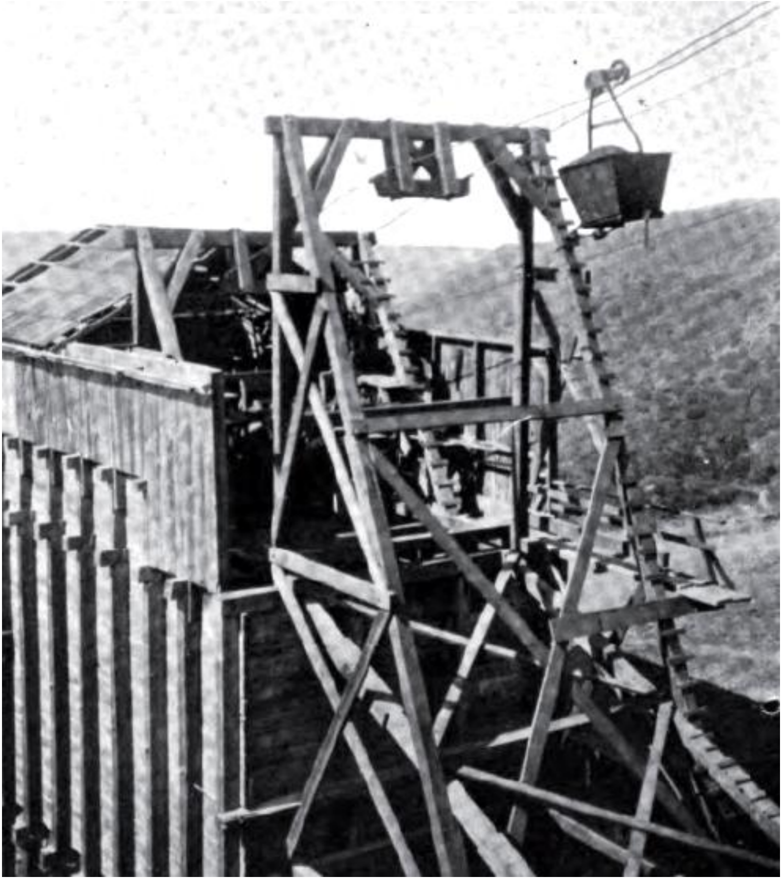
A Cleveland rock drill, circa 1914



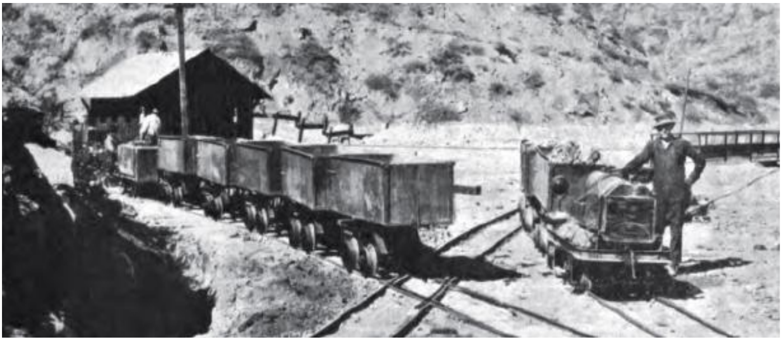
A rotary ore dryer above a Scott furnace, circa 1918



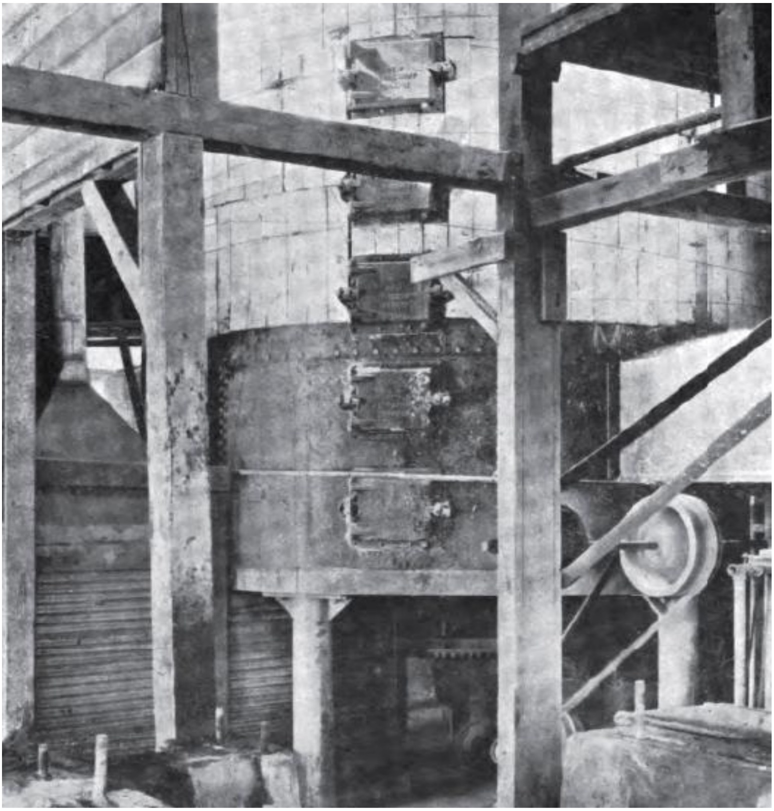
A corse ore furnace; built in 1873; photo taken in 1918



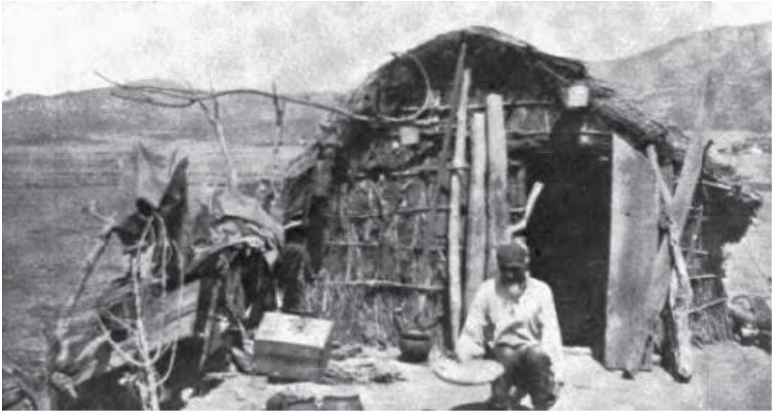
A typical tram and ore bin, circa 1918



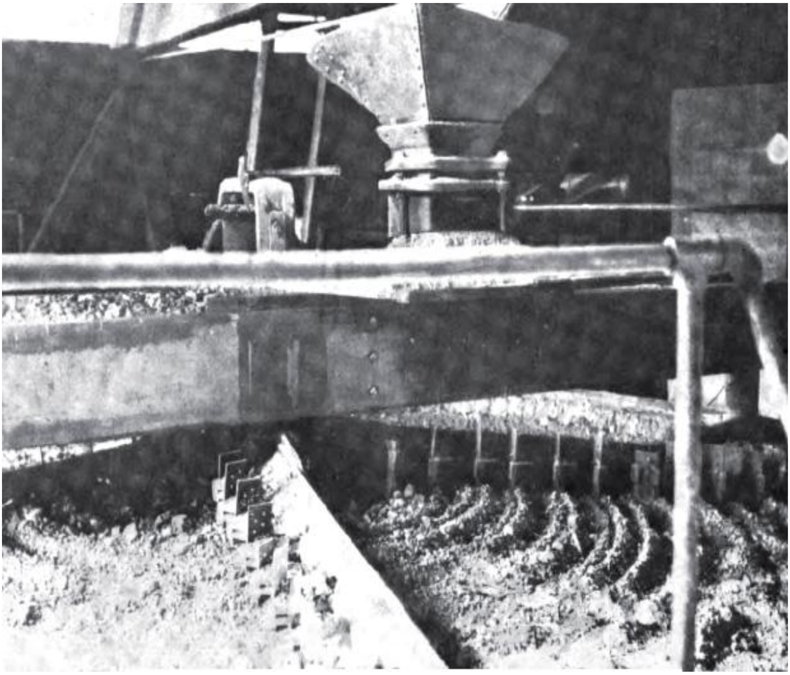
A typical ore train, circa 1918



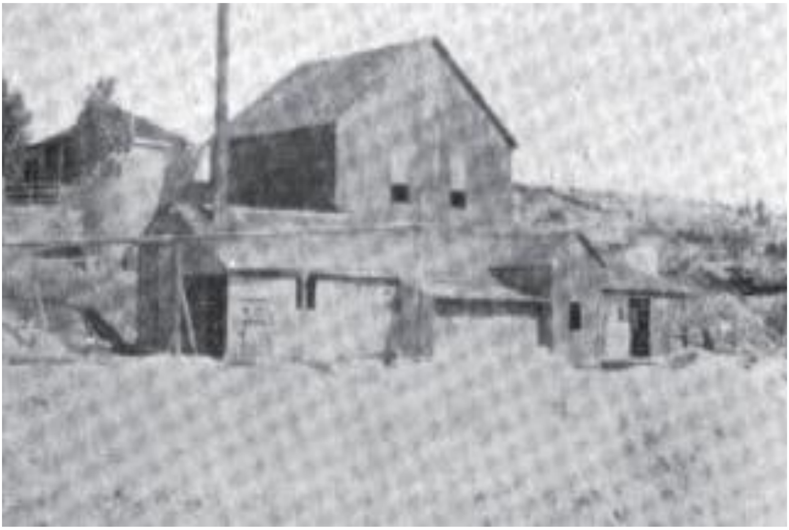
A Herreschoff multiple hearth furnace, circa 1918



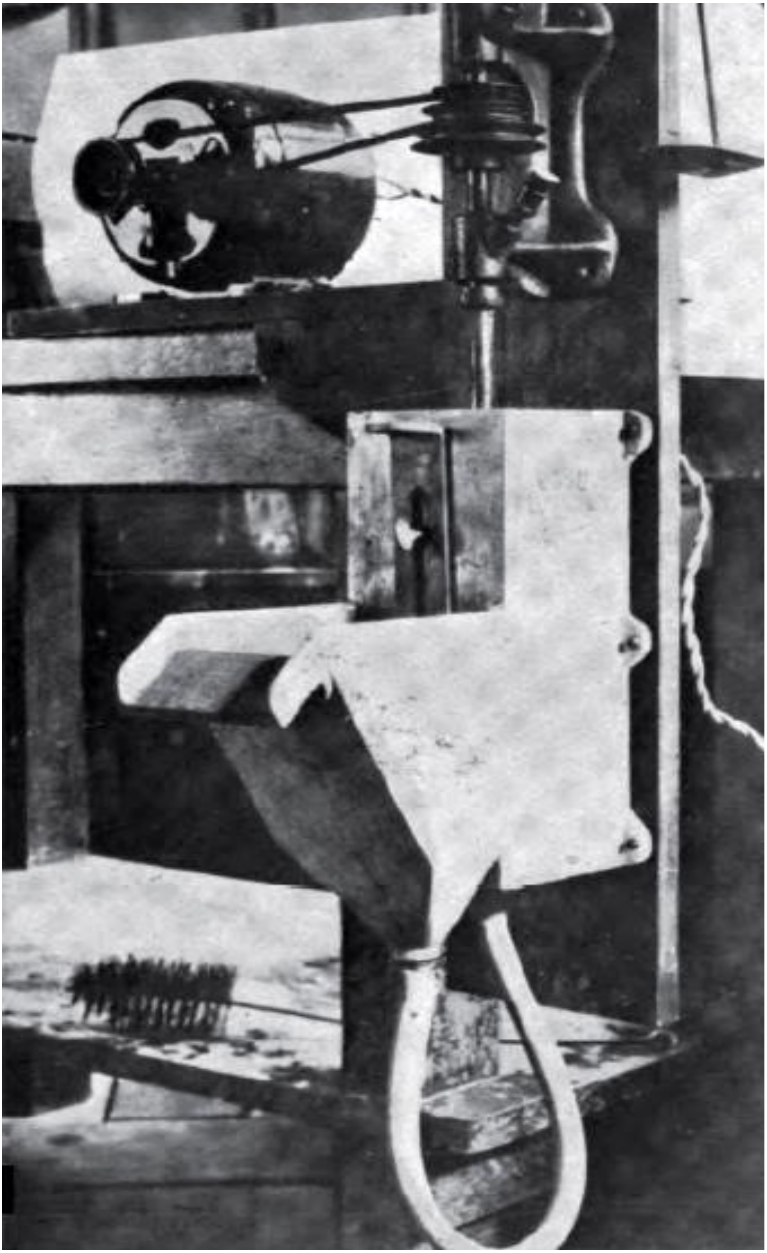
An old Indian medicine man, circa 1896



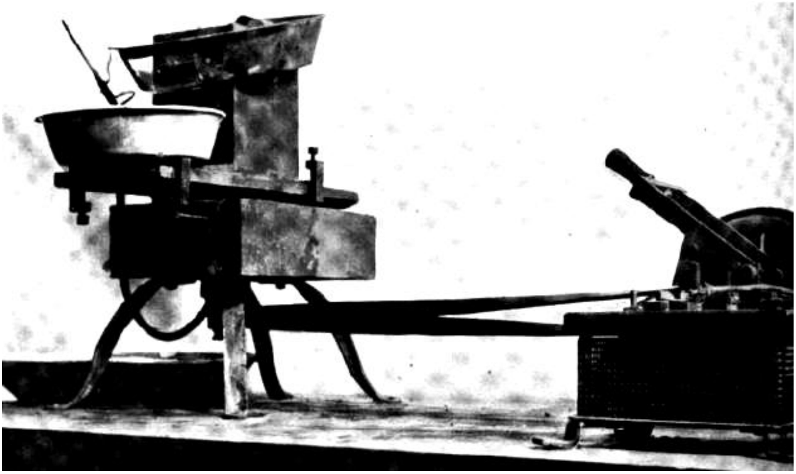
A view of the top of a drying hearth furnace, circa 1918



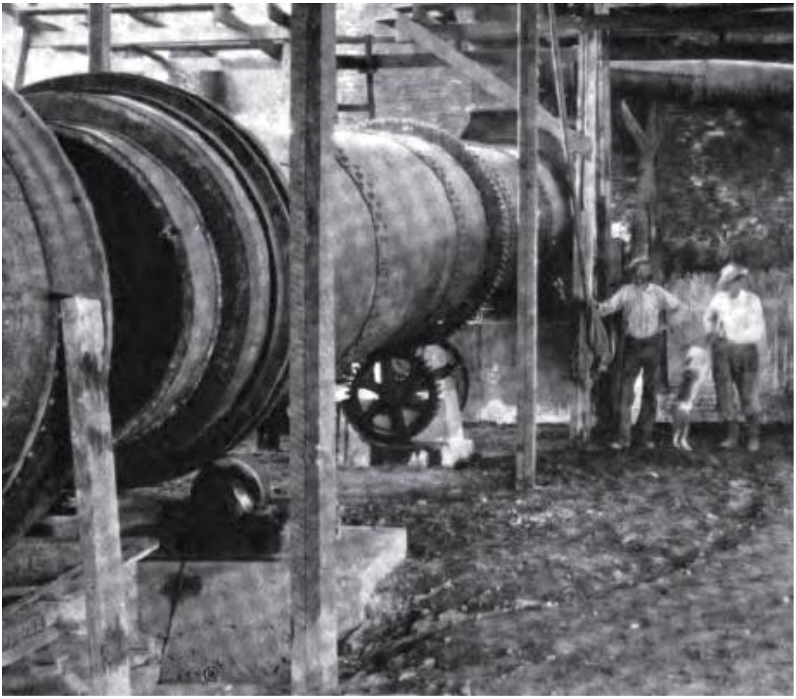
A ten stamp mill at Searchlight, circa 1906



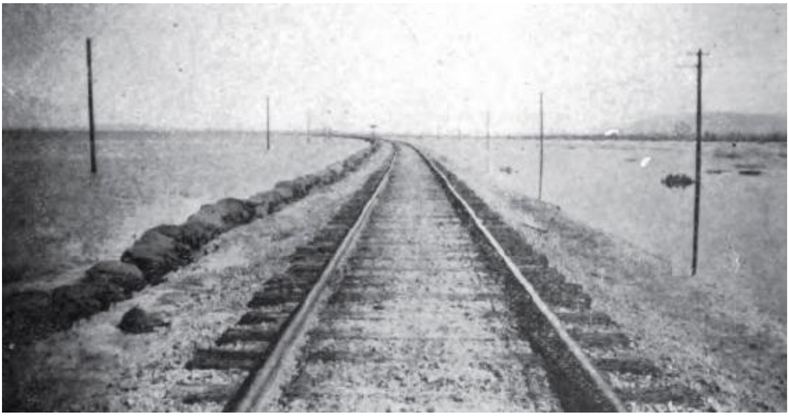
A case laboratory flotation machine, circa 1918



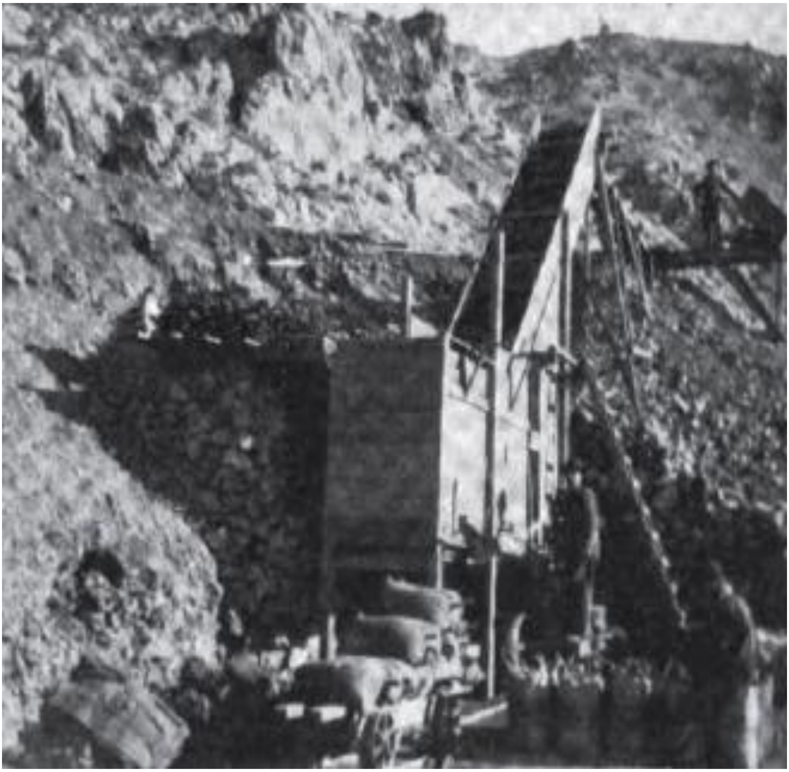
A Hyde laboratory flotation machine displayed in a metallurgical laboratory, circa 1918



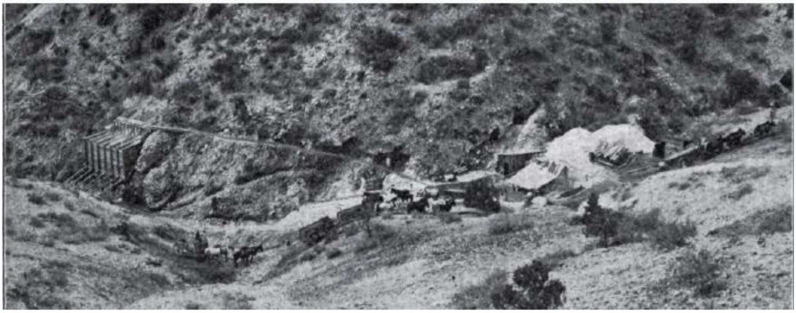
A typical rotary furnace, circa 1918



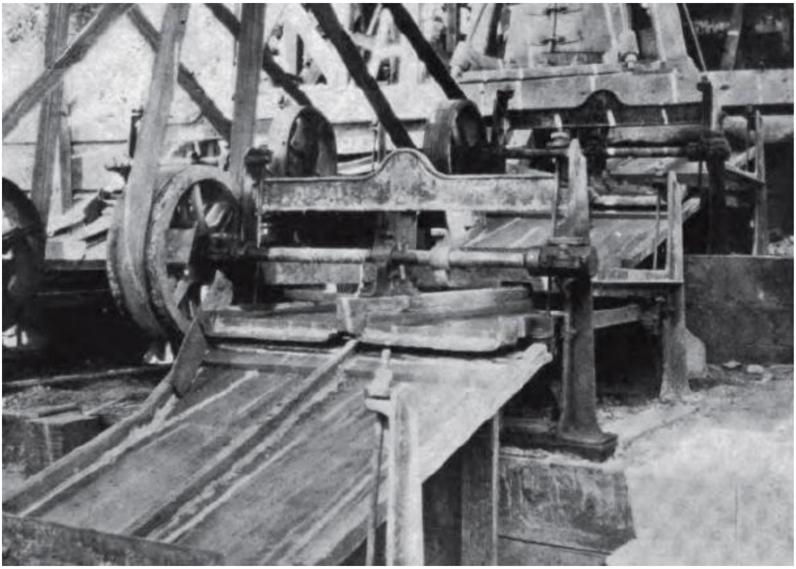
Sand bags lining left side of rail tracks near Salton Sea to hold back waters during flood



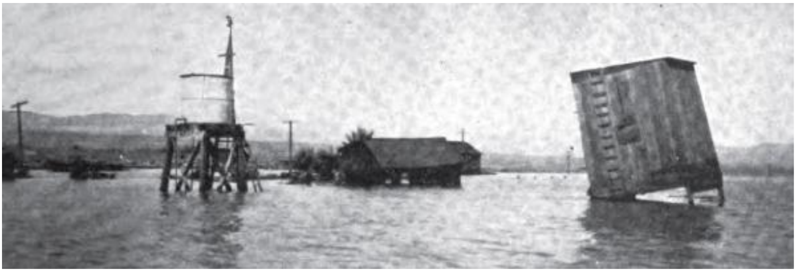
Ore bin at the Morning Star mine, circa 1906



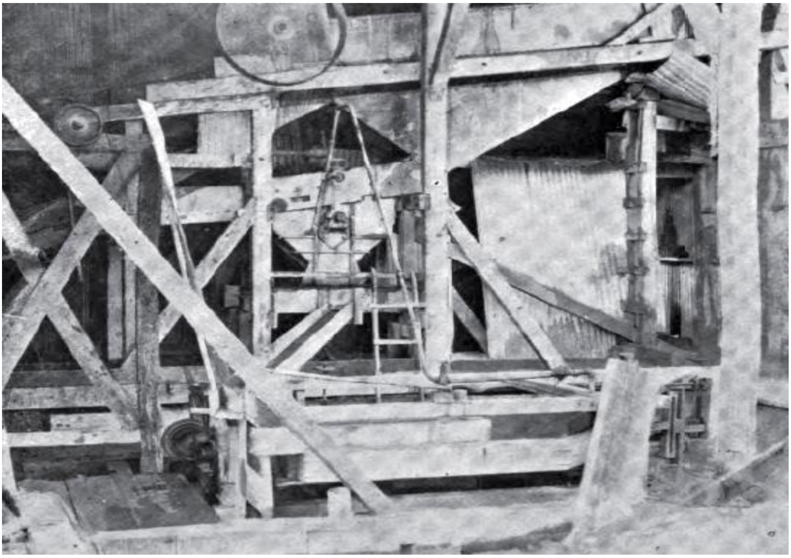
A typical desert canyon mine; notice the ore bins to the left and horses and wagons working the site, circa 1906



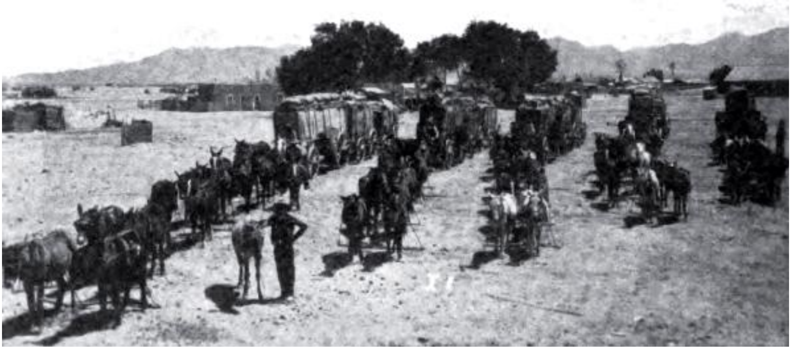
A typical bumper table, circa 1918



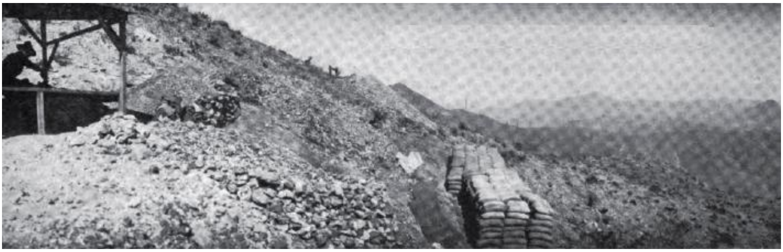
Salt works flooded in 1905 on the edge of the Salton Sea



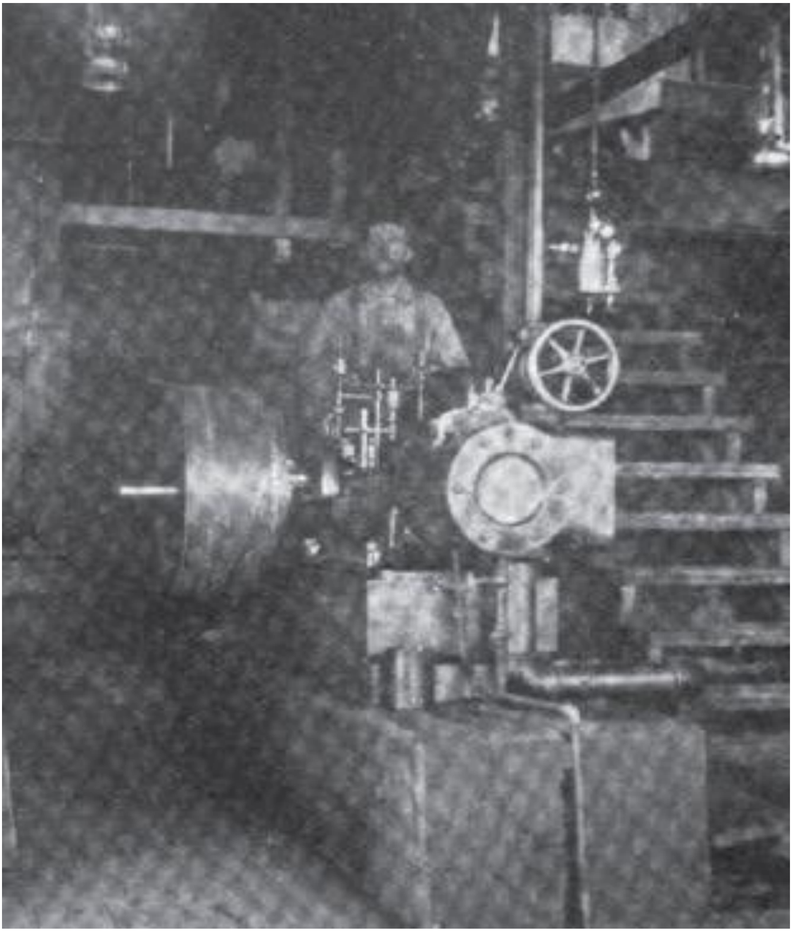
A Neill jig and New Standard table, circa 1918



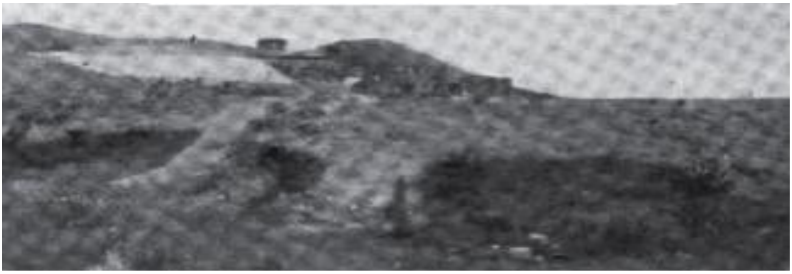
A 1905 photo showing five pack mule teams



Ore sacks ready for the shipment, circa 1900

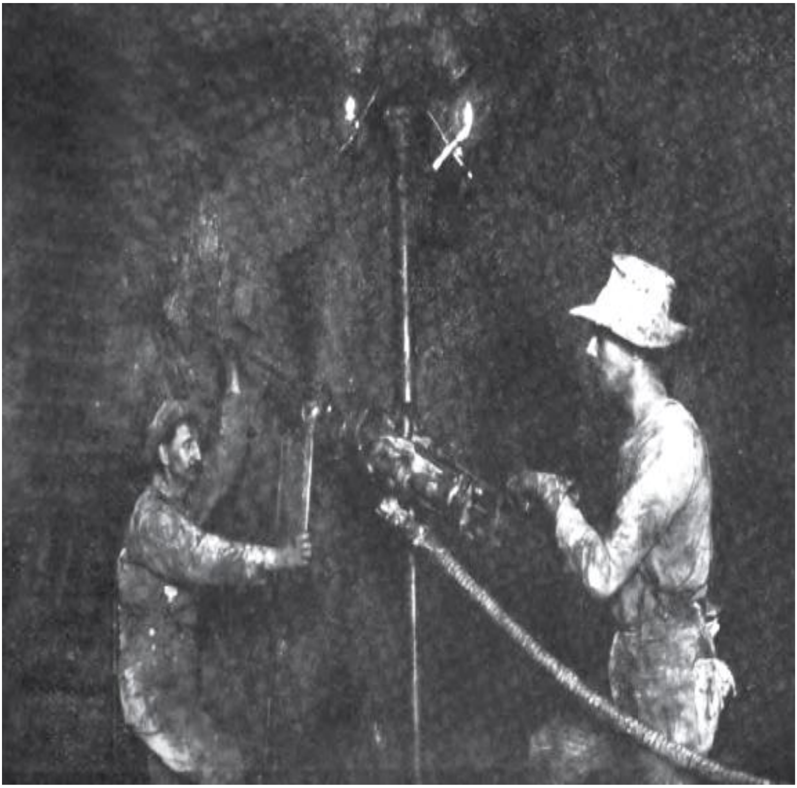


A typical engine room, circa 1906



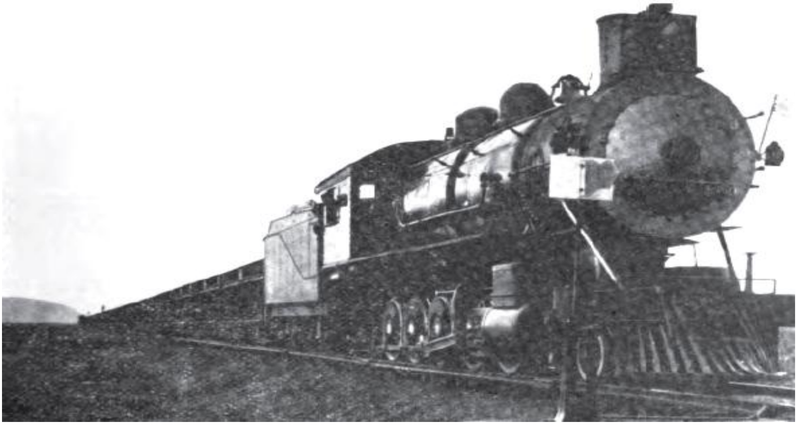
Searchlight mill, circa 1906

A 1905 view of Yuma, along the Colorado River



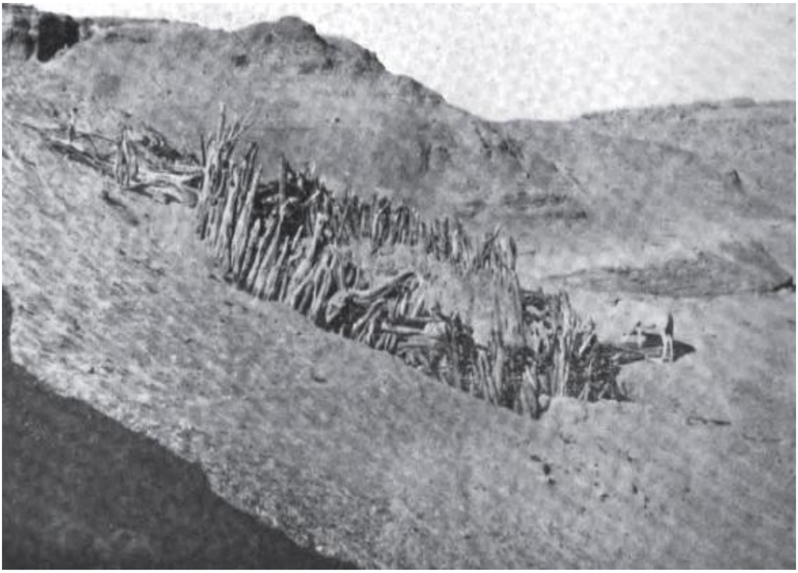
Two miners drilling, circa 1900

A typical traveler crossing the desert, circa 1900



A 1905 photo of a typical train crossing the desert

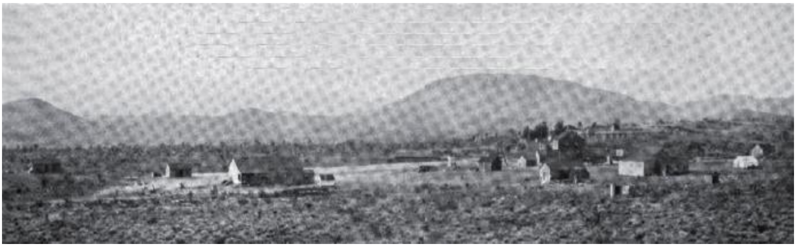
Miners working underground, circa 1900



A natural spring in the desert, circa 1900

A four horse team and wagon crossing the desert, circa 1900

A typical desert hoisting devise over a desert mine, circa 1900

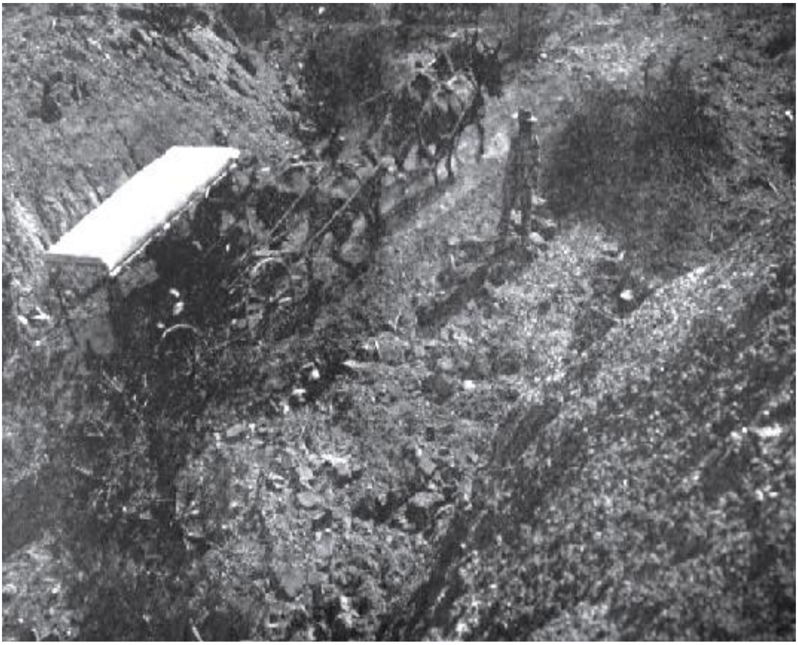


A 1906 view of Searchlight

A typical cyanide plant, circa 1900

Two Native Americans crossing the desert, circa 1900

A 1906 view of Searchlight



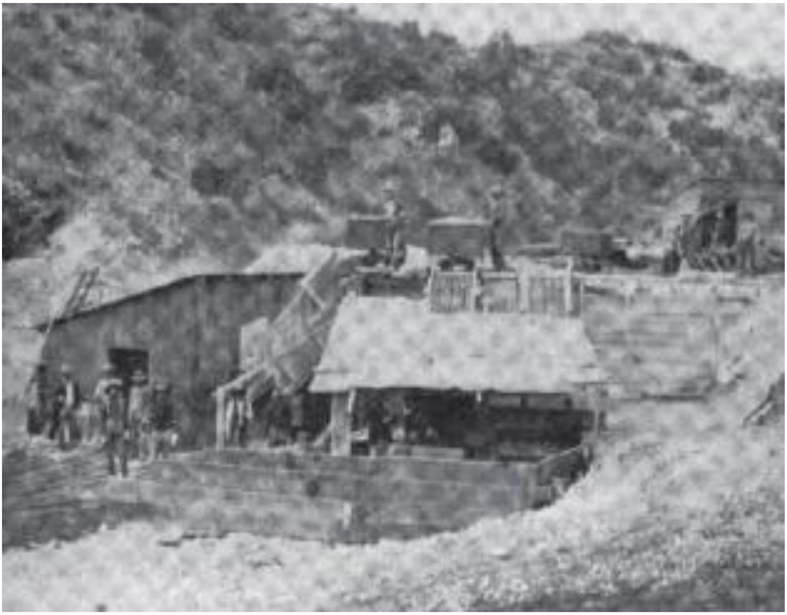
A four horse team pulling a buggy-wagon up a desert hill, circa 1900

Three Indians crossing the desert, circa 1900

A freight team at Quartette mine in Searchlight, circa 1900

Miners holding candles, circa 1896

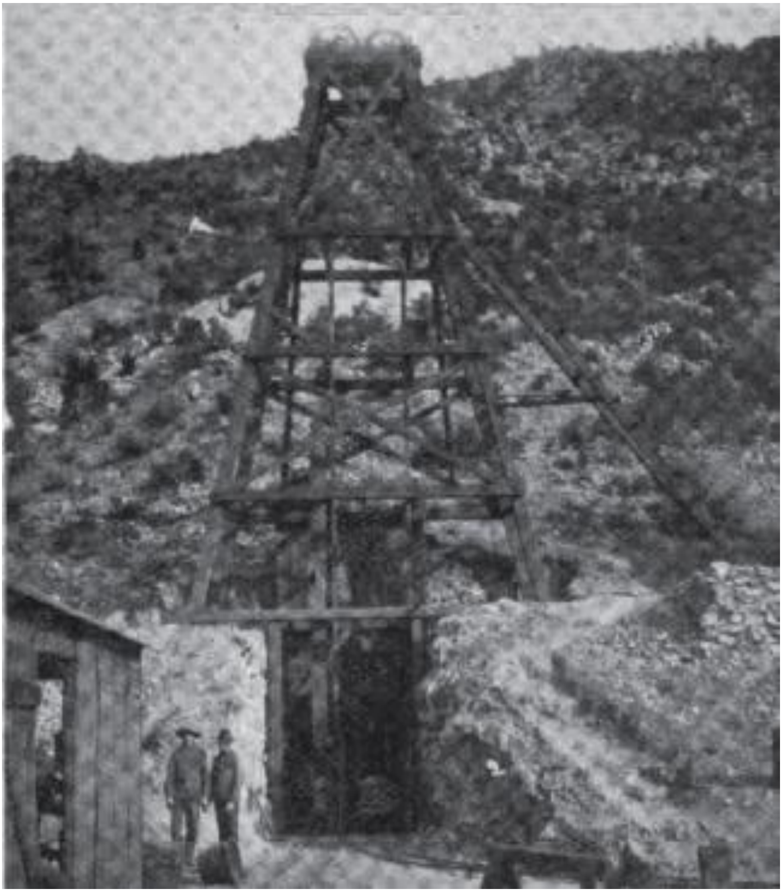
Basic housing at a desert mining camp, circa 1900



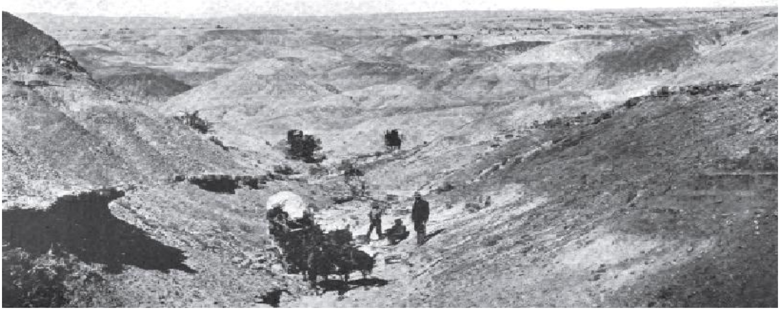
Typical ore sorting sheds in a desert canyon mine, circa 1906

A grove of Date Palms, circa 1900

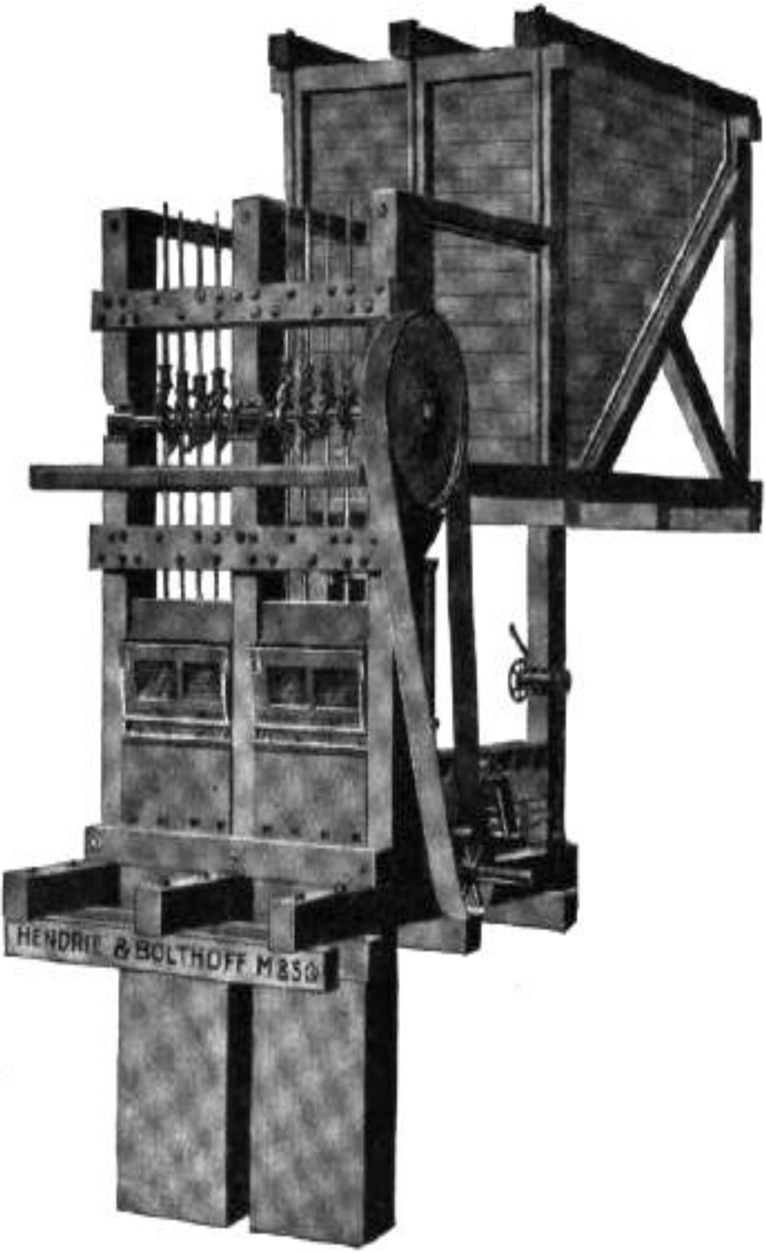
An Indian family living in the desert, circa 1900



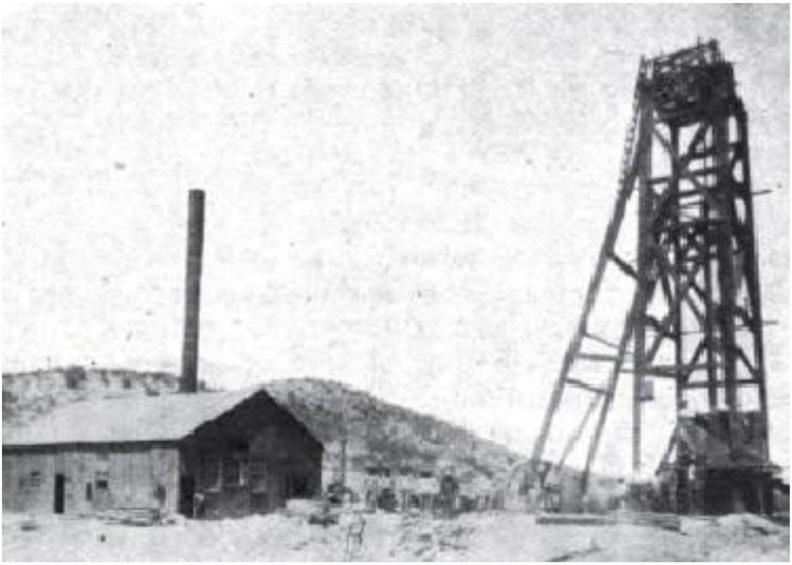
A typical gallow frame above shaft and tunnel, circa 1906



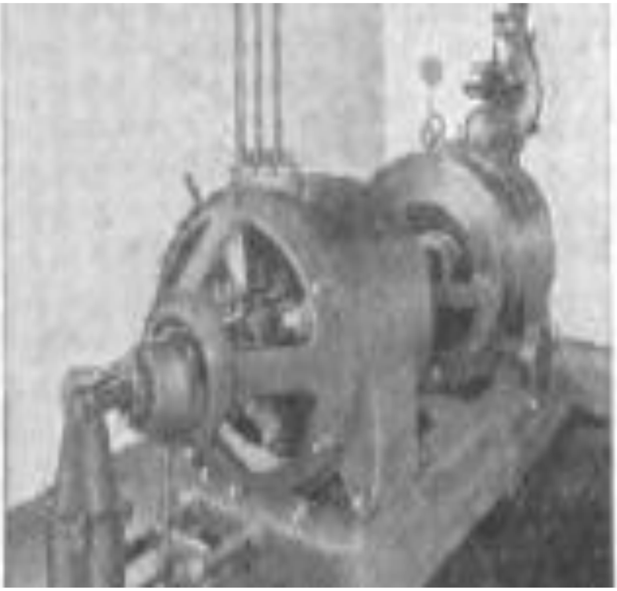
Travelers crossing the desert, circa 1900


HENDRIE & BOLTHOFF M&S Co

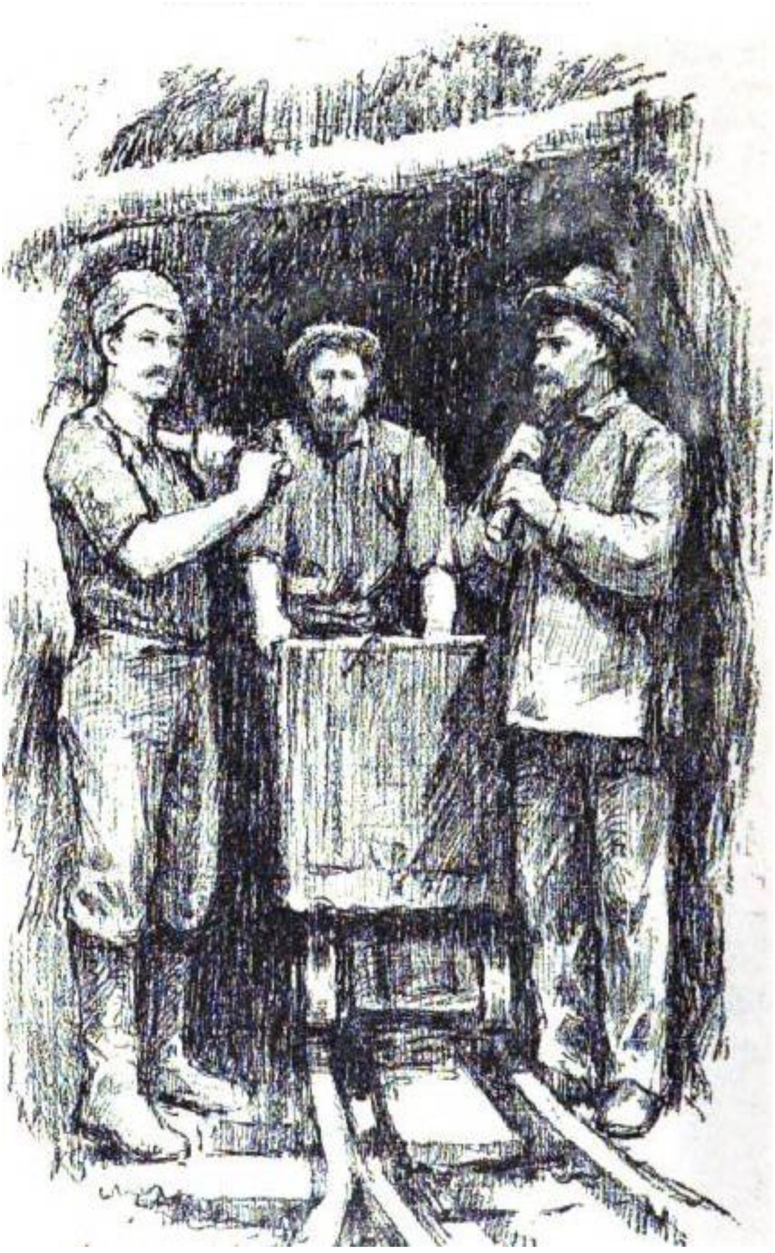
A typical ten stamp battery, circa 1900



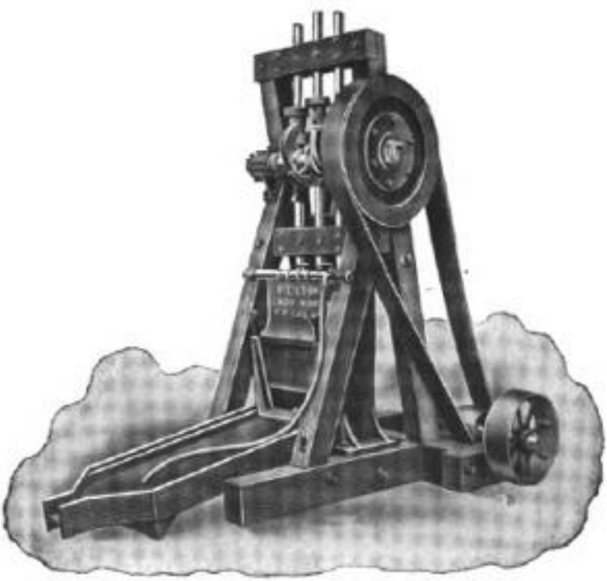
A typical power house and
gallow frame above a desert mine, circa 1906



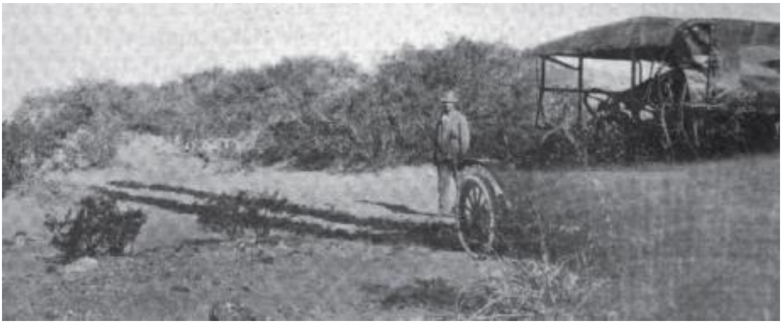
A typical turbine generator, circa 1906



A 1891 drawing of miners

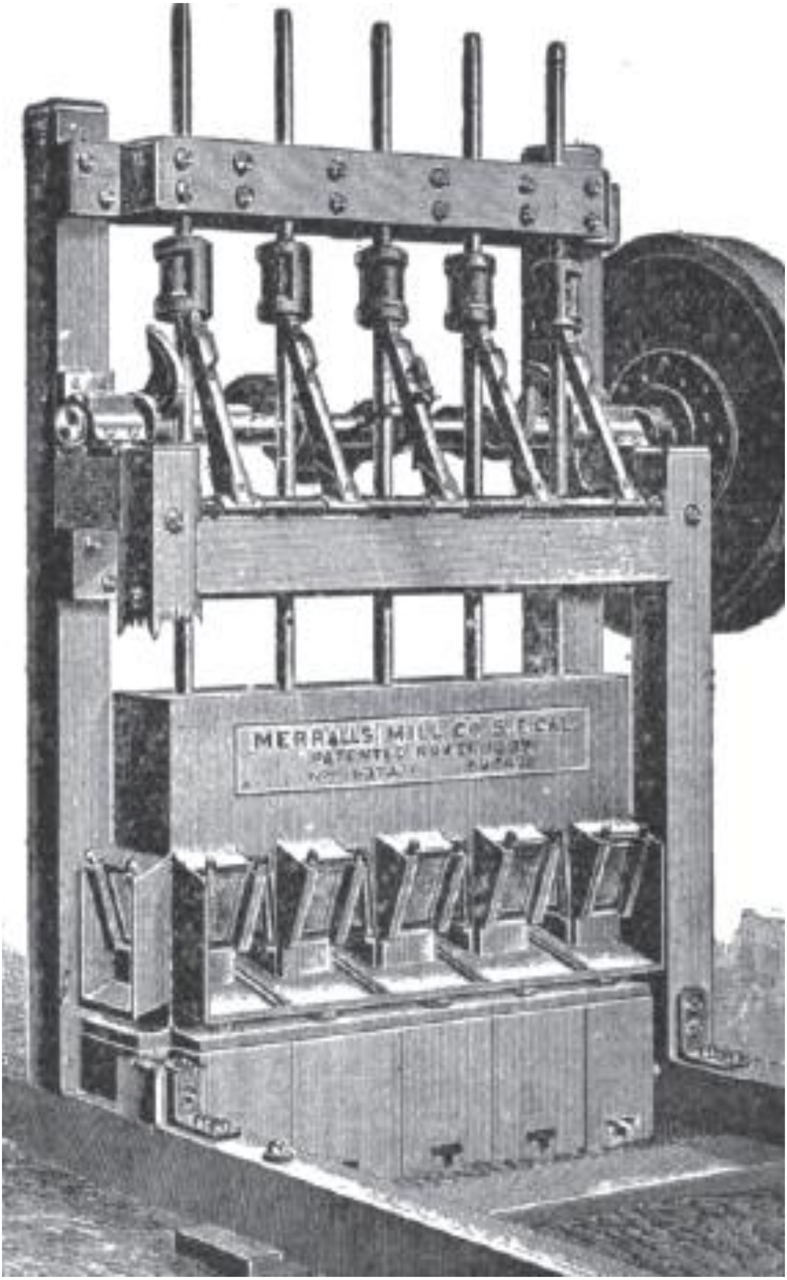


A 1906 sketch of a three stamp mill

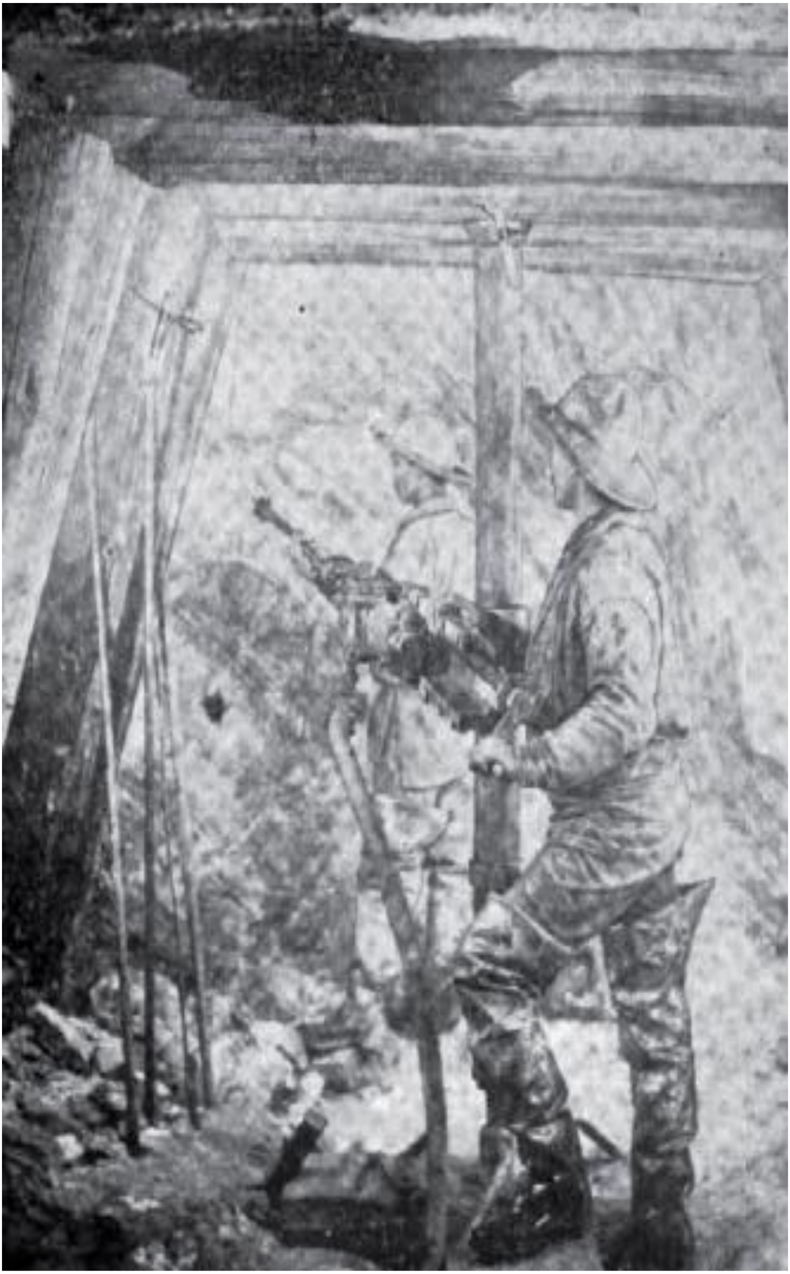


A desert Corduroyed road, circa 1917

Old desert mine works dating back to 1876; picture taken in 1917

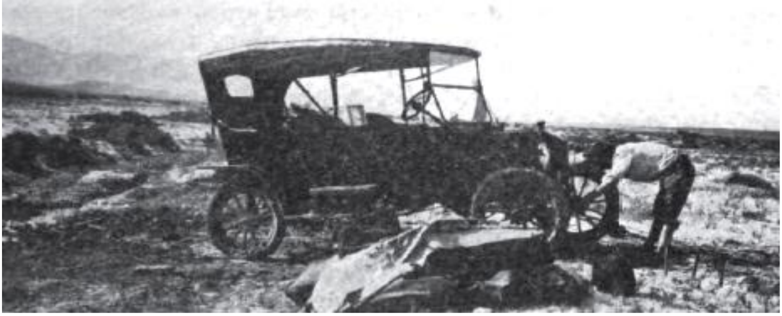

MERRALLS MILL CO S.F. CAL.
PATENTED

A typical stamp mill, circa 1906

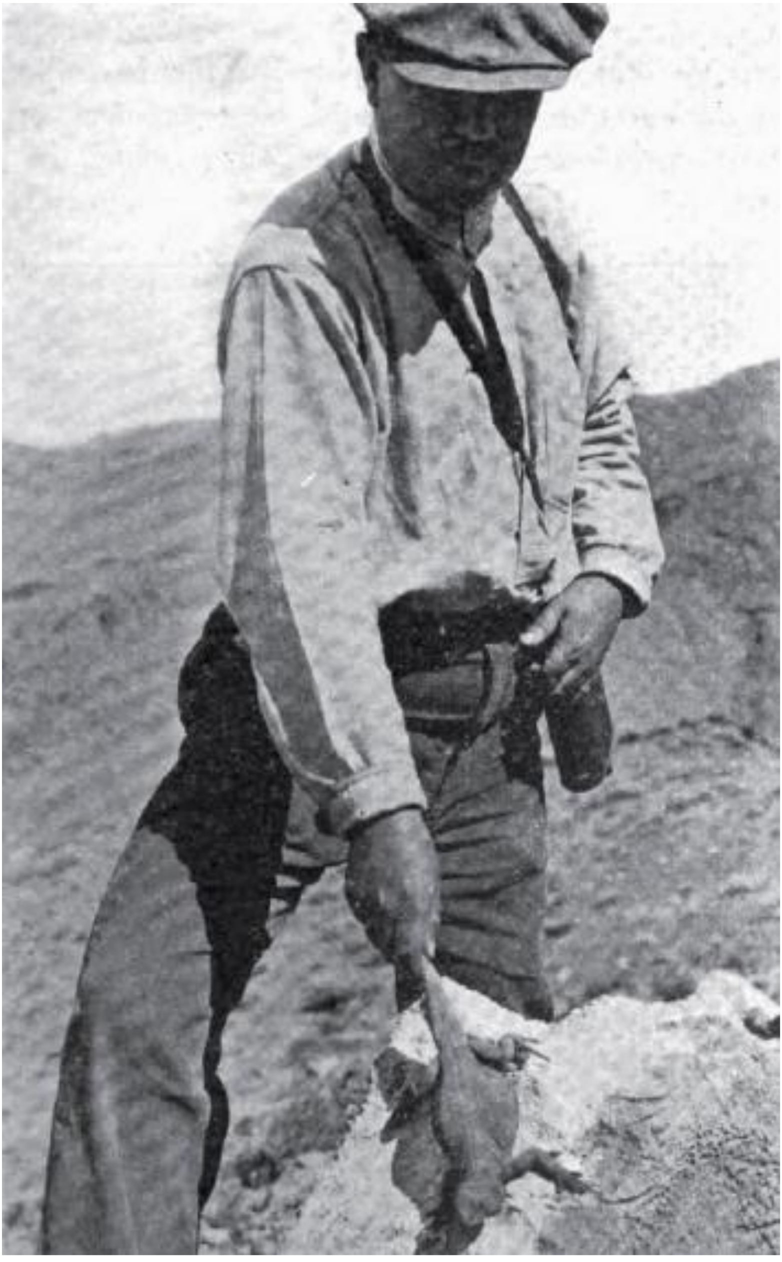


A sketch of a miner working an air drill, circa 1890

Three miners working a drift in 1891; notice the sledge hammers



A man using a "Pull-U-Out" to a Deadman in the desert, circa 1917



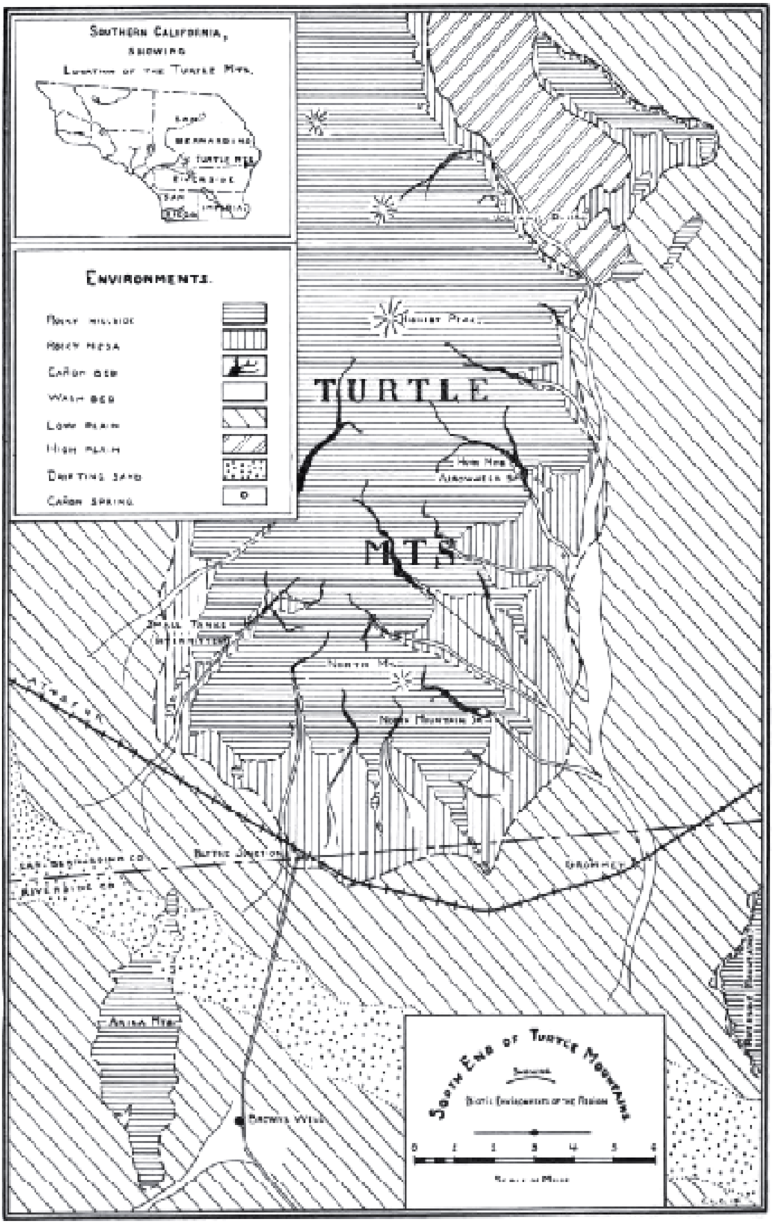
A man holding the deserts favorite animal, a lizard, circa 1917

A horse pulling a mining car, circa 1917

First Borax train used in Death Valley,

which is located north of No Man's Land, circa 1917

Tent in the California desert, circa 1908

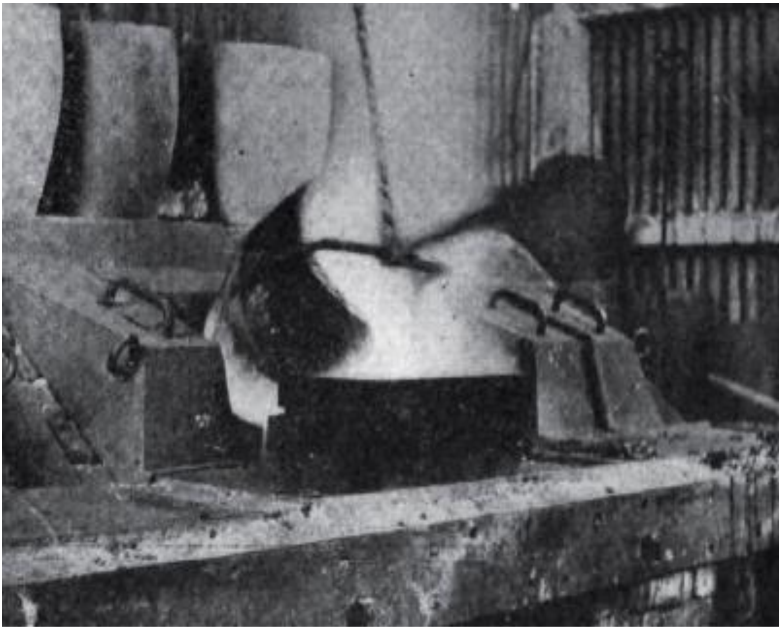

Southern California, showing Location of the Turtle Mts.
San Bernardino
Turtle Mts.
Riverside
San Diego
Imperial
Environments.
Rocky hillside
Rocky mesa
Cañon bed
Wash bed
Low plain
High plain
Drifting sand
Cañon spring
TURTLE
MTS.
Small Tanks (intermittent)
North Mtn.
North Mountain Sp.
Blythe Junction
San Bernardino Co.
Riverside Co.
Grommet
Brown's Well
South End of Turtle Mountains
0 1 2 3 4 5 6
Scale in Miles

Circa 1915 map showing Turtle Mountains, Blythe Junction, Grommet rail stop, and Brown's Well

An 1890 arrastra

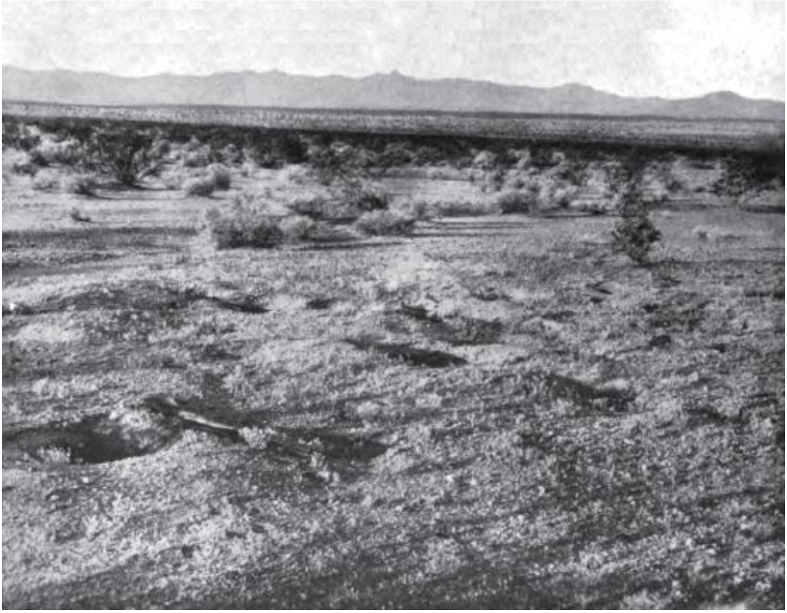
Gravity tram and ore bin at Noonday mine, circa 1917

The Southern Pacific crossing the California desert, circa 1909



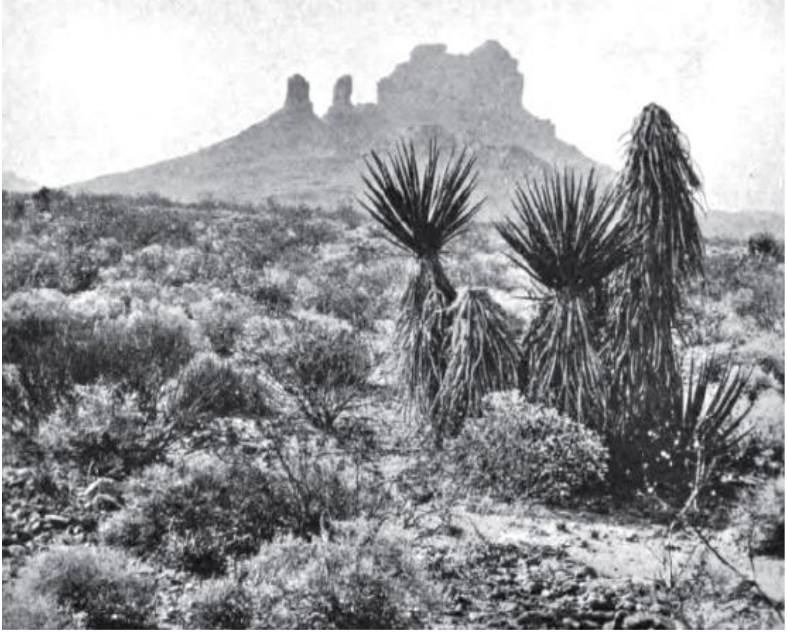
Pouring a 2300 once bar of gold, circa 1917

The Salton Basin and the salt works
before the rising of the Salton Sea, circa 1904

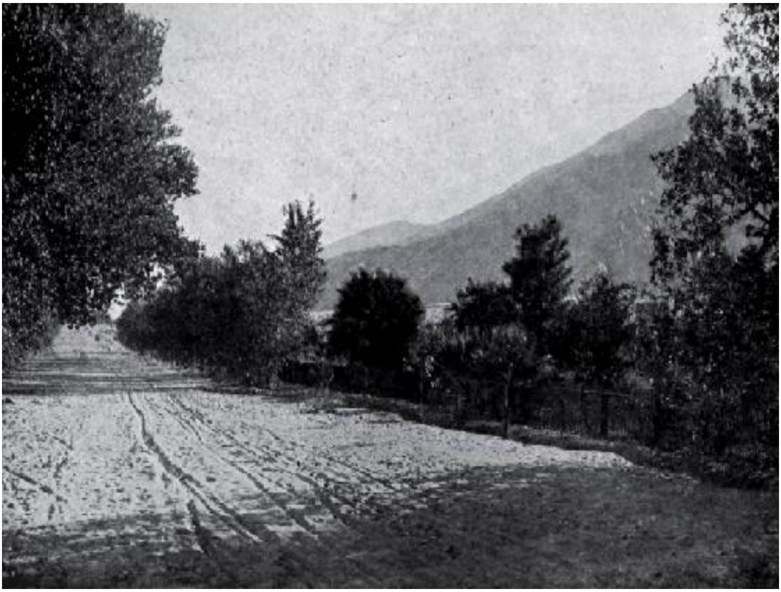


Low plain surrounding Blythe Junction, circa 1915

Santa Rosa mining Camp, circa 1917



View of Turtle Mountain from Blythe Junction area, circa 1915



Palm Springs 1904

A 1904 view of a Playa on the Colorado Desert

1904 view of the Colorado Desert

A road station in the California desert, circa 1908

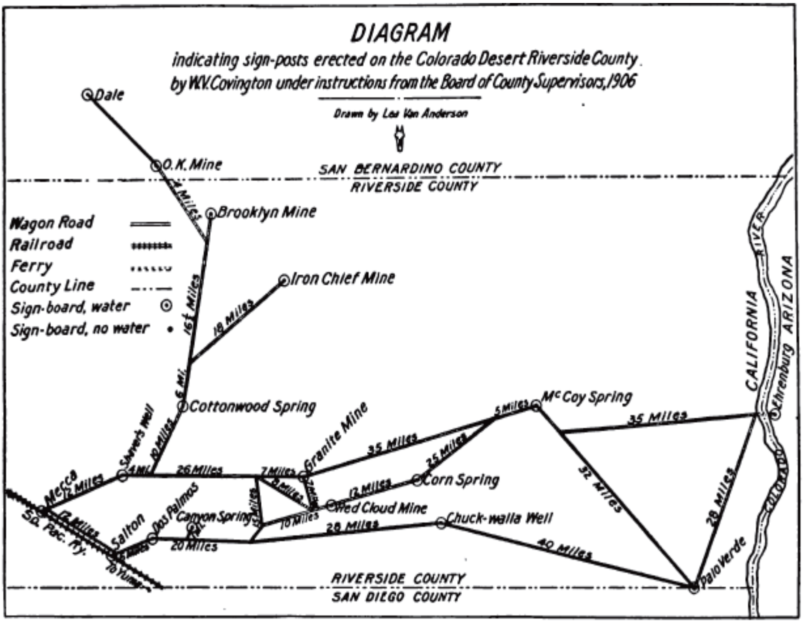
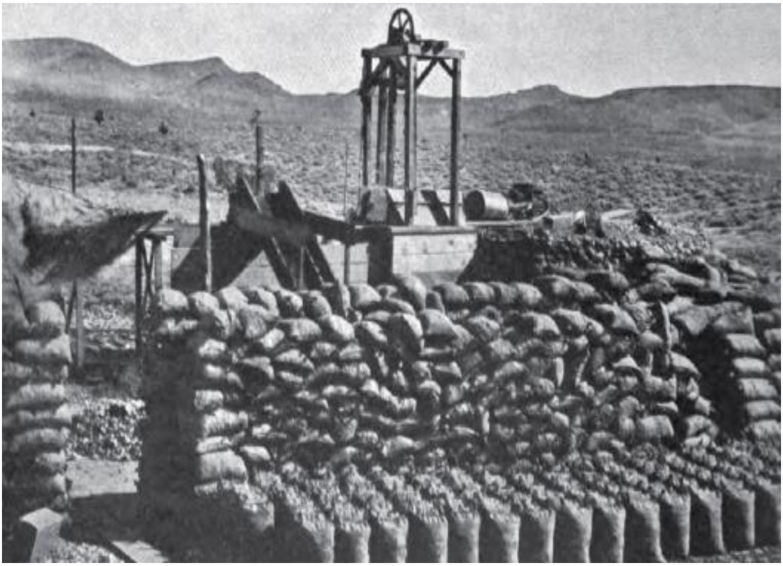


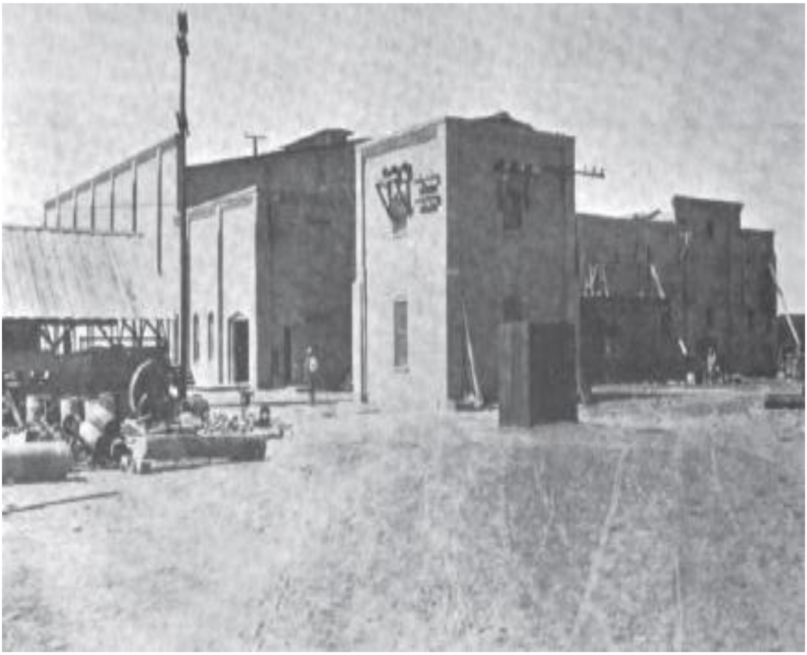
DIAGRAM
indicating sign-posts erected on the Colorado Desert Riverside County.
by W.V. Covington under instructions from the Board of County Supervisors, 1906
Drawn by Les Van Anderson
Dale
O.K. Mine
SAN BERNARDINO COUNTY
RIVERSIDE COUNTY
4 Miles
Brooklyn Mine
Wagon Road
Railroad
Ferry
County Line
Sign-board, water
Sign-board, no water
16½ Miles
Iron Chief Mine
18 Miles
6 Mi.
Cottonwood Spring
Shavers Well
10 Miles
Granite Mine
35 Miles
5 Miles
McCoy Spring
35 Miles
CALIFORNIA
RIVER
ARIZONA
Ehrenburg
Mecca
12 Miles
4 Mi.
26 Miles
7 Miles
25 Miles
Corn Spring
12 Miles
Red Cloud Mine
32 Miles
COLORADO
Dos Palmas
Canyon Spring
10 Miles
28 Miles
Chuck-walla Well
28 Miles
So. Pac. Ry.
12 Miles
Salton
20 Miles
40 Miles
Palo Verde
To Yuma
RIVERSIDE COUNTY
SAN DIEGO COUNTY

A 1906 map showing area south of Dale – Colorado Desert

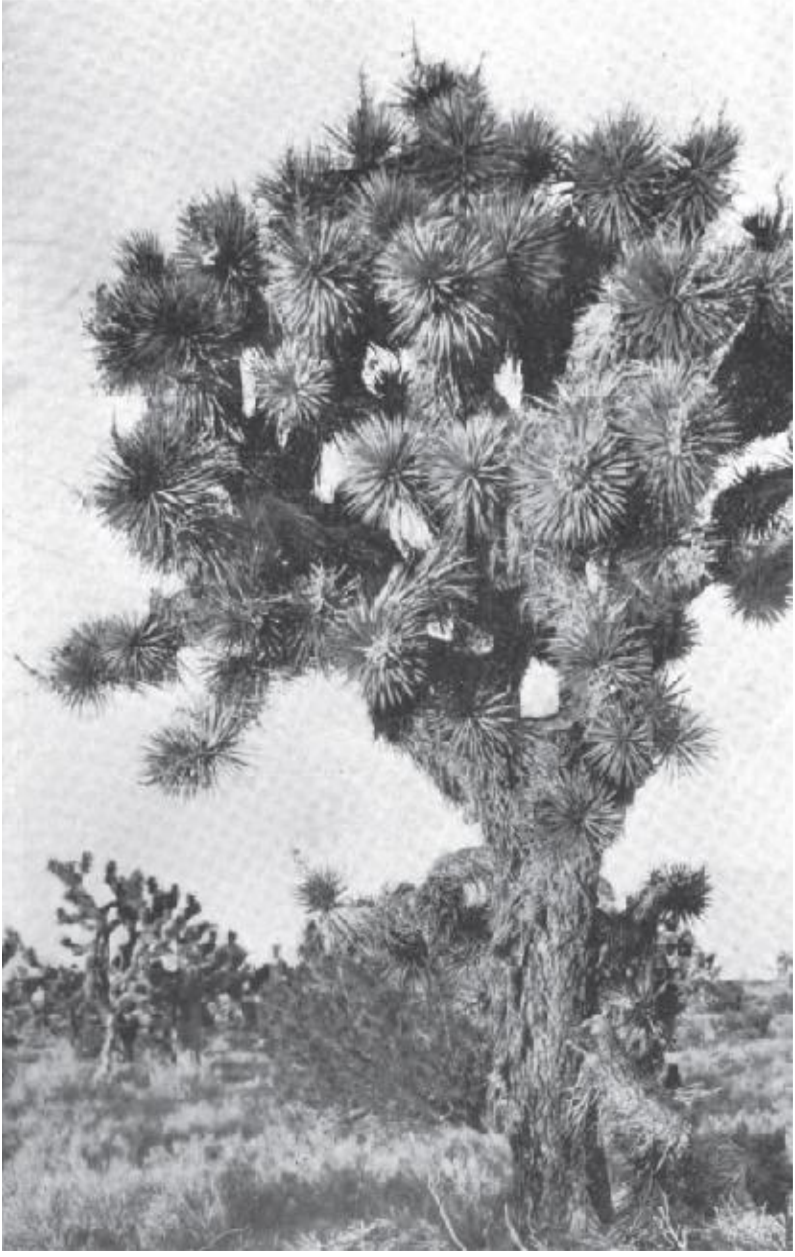
Desert Camper, circa 1908



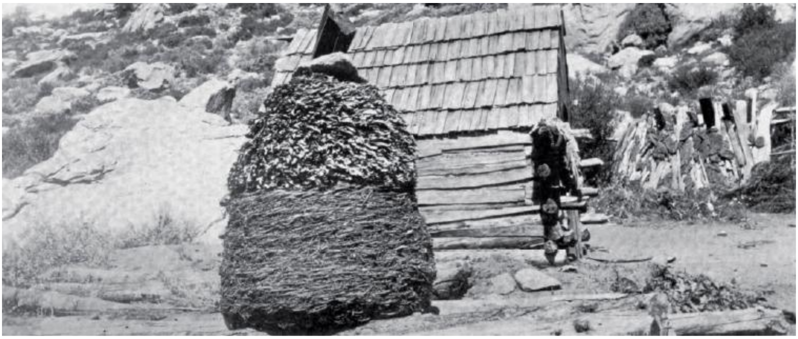
Hundreds of sacks of ore awaiting shipment, circa 1904



El Centro ice house, circa 1908

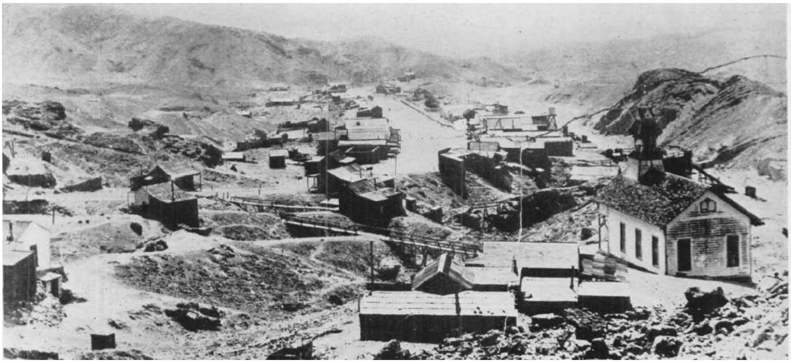


A Yucca Palm with several visible rifle shots, circa 1908



A mission Indian basket granary of acorns and home, circa 1908

Milligan cemetery, which is near the center of No Man's Land



Calico, circa 1890